



W^oitheridge

Family History Society

Summer and Autumn 2018

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Notices

Witheridge FHS AGM and Reunion 2019

The 2019 Annual General Meeting of the Witheridge Family History Society will take place on Saturday 11 May at St Mark's Centre, Biggin Hill. The meeting will open at 10:45 and is expected to close by 12:45. All members are invited to come and have a say in how our Society is run, to put forward any ideas they may have about how the Society could improve its service to members, and to vote.

As usual, those members unable to attend will be able to vote by post or email. All members, whether attending or using absentee voting procedures, are also asked to forward, by Monday 11 March, any matters or ideas they wish to have included on the Agenda.

Our annual Family Reunion will follow from 13:00 at the same venue and is open to all Witheridge/Wetheridge descendants, whether or not they are members of Witheridge FHS. Please feel free to invite any of your Witheridge/Wetheridge family members to come and join us at the reunion. There is no charge for admission.

This should be a fun and informative occasion, and we hope everyone will bring their own family research and memorabilia. Kim Cook will also be bringing the displays she arranged for the 2018 Reunion (Ermington, Wembury, Bideford-Halwell, and Wetheridge branches), with additional material, plus new displays relating to other Witheridge family branches. Experienced researchers will be on hand to answer questions on family history in general, and Witheridge/Wetheridge ancestry in particular. There will also be the option of being put in touch with long-lost family members, subject of course to the agreement of both parties.

The venue - St Mark's Centre, Church Road, Biggin Hill, Westerham, Kent, TN16 3LB - is easily accessible by car, just off the A233 approximately 20 minutes from M25 junctions 4, 5, or 6, as well as via public transport, with London buses 246, 320 or 464 and local bus R2 stopping outside, and the nearest rail stations (from which these buses connect) being Hayes (4 miles from Biggin Hill, 40 minutes from London Bridge), Bromley South (6 miles from Biggin Hill, 20 minutes from London Victoria) and Chelsfield (4 miles from Biggin Hill).

After the reunion, there will be an opportunity to attend a family meal in a local pub/restaurant.

For further details, please email witheridge1987@gmail.com, putting 'Reunion' in the subject box.

Subscription Reminder

Subscriptions for 2019 become due on 1 January. All members will shortly receive a personal reminder from our Membership Secretary, Geoff Shingler, including details of payment methods. Once you have renewed, please send 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 Witheridge FHS website. We are gradually adding more information and photos to this section of the website, so don't miss out on access to this

Family News

News from Jennifer Woolcott

Recently, Kim Cook heard from an old school friend, now living in Shoalhaven, New South Wales that the recent wild-fires in the state had come close to Nowra, the area where many of our Australian families live. Kim immediately emailed Jennifer Woolcott (currently in Canberra, but about to return to NSW) and was very relieved to have this reply:



The most concerning fire was at the west of Bomaderry, north of Nowra, with a westerly gale blowing towards houses adjacent to bushland. Uncle Jack's widow, Aunty Rita, and my cousins, Kay and Ann, live in the vicinity. The firefighters did a magnificent job (pictured) and the fire was stopped at the back fences of the properties. Only one shed was lost. I spoke to Aunty Rita at the weekend and she said that she and Ann were fine except for the smoke at the time. Kay however has spent her time cleaning black soot from her house and windows. Thank goodness for the magnificent men and women in our fire brigades and emergency services. We couldn't survive without them.

Here in the eastern states of Australia we are suffering, some would say, the worst drought in a century. Farms are dry dust bowls with farmers finding it increasingly more difficult to source hay for their stock. Small towns west of the Great Dividing Range are even starting to run out of water as the town supplies dry up. There is a lot of fundraising happening through charities and TV networks etc to assist farmers to buy fodder, basic supplies and, in many cases, put food on the table for families. The worrying part is that it is still winter here and we have summer to look forward to.

Thank goodness we no longer have the farm. I can remember quite vividly about 15 years ago coming home from work and having to go out and handfeed the sheep and cattle, and Richard having to pull dead and dying stock from the dams. Soul destroying!

Enough of that! Richard and I are well and busily packing up our house in Canberra, making our home in Taree on the north coast of New South Wales. This was Richard's old family home.

I have organised a Witheridge Family Reunion for us all in September. This time we will be in Wollongong which we hope will be a little bit more central to facilitate travel. We are all getting on in years and the more elderly among us rely on family assistance to attend these days. It is very difficult to get the younger generation interested and those with young children have a variety of sporting commitments over the weekend.

With best wishes to you all,
Jennifer

P.S. Update on the drought: The Queen has sent a letter to the Government expressing hers and Prince Phillip's concern for people suffering from the effects of the drought and included a personal undisclosed donation to the drought appeal. Very touching!

Family News

News of Judith Witheridge

We were very concerned to learn, late in August, that Judith Witheridge had been diagnosed with bowel cancer, and was immediately taken to Wollongong Hospital for surgery. Her son Neil wrote that 'it looks as though the cancer has been isolated, though we are waiting on test results to confirm whether this is the case'.

Judith recovered well in hospital and, with Internet access, was able to keep in touch. Having started a course of gentle physiotherapy, Judith was transferred to a convalescent unit before being allowed home. On 3 October Judith wrote this:

Praise the Lord! Thank you, all you praying people! I have a positive prognosis! I've been told to go home and enjoy my life (which is what ALL of us should do). I'll be having three monthly blood tests for a while for an antigen which would indicate any cancer present...it's a slow-growing one and normal chemotherapy wouldn't be effective! Wonderful day!

Already Judith is getting out and about again, and has enjoyed family outings, including one to see the musical *Evita*.

Those who have been following Judith's progress are relieved and delighted at this positive news, and wish her great enjoyment of this new lease of life.

This photo of Ian, Neil, Rowena, and Judith was taken on a visit to Sydney in April.



News from Geoff and Catherine Shingler

For a month from early May to early June, Peterborough Embroiderers' Guild had an exhibition in the Cathedral's Visitors Centre as part of the celebrations for the cathedral's 900th anniversary. Alison (Smith), Catherine & Hannah all had a piece exhibited and set a branch record by being the first 3 generations to have pieces in the same exhibition!



Alison Smith, her daughter Catherine Shingler, and granddaughter Hannah Shingler are all part of the Bradworthy family, which has been traced back to Fremington, where James Witheridge, son of James and Joan, was baptised in 1604. The family later moved via Ilfracombe to Bradworthy where, in 1841, Thomas Witheridge, 5 x great-grandson of James (1604), married Ann (Nancy) Moore. Their daughter, Mary Grace Witheridge married James Welch, and Alison Smith is their great-granddaughter.

Family News

News from Rob and Cathy Staples

In August, Rob and Cathy Staples had a wonderful opportunity to fly to the UK and take a cruise on Cunard's *Queen Victoria*, exploring northern Europe and Scandinavia. After a couple of days sightseeing in London, on 10 August they travelled to Southampton to see the amazing sight of the three Queens (pictured), *Elizabeth*, *Mary* and *Victoria*, all in dock together. Making it all extra-special was a fly-past from the Red Arrows!



No doubt Rob and Cathy will be sharing more news of their cruise in due course. On 24 August, when they returned to Southampton, Rob and Cathy immediately caught a train to East Croydon, where they were met by Kim and Roy Cook. First stop was at the Battle of Britain Memorial Chapel in Biggin Hill, with its 'Gate Guardians', a Hurricane and a Spitfire. Although the whole site was under wraps while a Battle of Britain Museum is being built, Rob charmed his way in and was able to get this photo. Then it was time to head for Roy and Kim's home, where they all enjoyed a meal and a good catch-up time.

All too soon the brief visit was over, and Roy ferried them all to Heathrow for Rob and Cathy to catch their 10.00 pm flight back to Australia. At Heathrow, Cathy took this picture of Kim, Roy, and Rob before they said their farewells.

Kim and Roy thoroughly enjoyed the chance to catch up with Rob, whom they'd first met at the 2014 Reunion in Devizes, and to get to know Cathy, whom they'd never met before.



The ancestry of this prolific Australian family has been traced back to Berrynarbor, Devon in the early 16th century. The earliest known ancestor is Thomas Witheridge, whose son Nicholas Witheridge married Mary Somer in Berrynarbor in 1553. In 1804 their 6 x great-grandson Francis Witheridge married Ann Eastaway in Ilfracombe. Their grandson, Philemon Thomas Witheridge, (1845-1937) grew up in Ilfracombe, but in the 1870s he and his wife Mary Jane Carvath emigrated to New South Wales, Australia. One son, another Philemon (born 1883) was the grandfather of our member Rob Staples, who joined us at our 2014 WFHS Reunion in Devizes. Another son, William (born 1890) was father of Bill, Jack, Tom, Allan and Alma. Jennifer Woolcott is the daughter of Bill. Rita (mentioned in Jennifer's letter) is the widow of Jack. Allan, (1926-2016), was married to Judith and, from 2006-2013, they were the WFHS Australia Representatives, and hosted many Witheridge reunions in Australia. Judith is now an Honorary Member of WFHS. Her son Neil and his wife Rowena are members, and also joined us at our 2104 WFHS Reunion in Devizes.

Family News

**Special congratulations to Gordon Witheridge of Leicester,
who celebrated his 90th birthday on 2 November.**

Gordon and his wife Monica joined Witheridge FHS on day one, 1 May 1987, and continued in membership until very recently. Gordon and Monica, who have recently moved to a retirement complex, have three children, Jane, David and Adrian, 7 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren!

We are grateful to Jane's husband, Steve Billings, for keeping us informed, and look forward to hearing a full report of the celebrations in the next Newsletter.

*Note: Gordon is a member of the Ermington branch. He's descended from **Arthur Witheridge** (1758-1857) and his wife **Elizabeth Bowden**, whose son **Philip Witheridge** (1791-1872 married **Mary Northmore**. Their son **John Northmore Witheridge** (1845-1914) married twice, and by his second wife, **Emma Louise Grigg**, had **Stanley Louis Witheridge** (1902-1946). Stanley was Gordon's father. Gordon's closest connection in WFHS is **Brenda Dwyne**. Gordon is Brenda's half-blood 1st cousin once removed.*

Do you have any news you would like to share?

Email our secretary, amykennedy.ask@gmail.com, to be included in the next newsletter.

Contact Points

Website

All Officers of the Society can be contacted using the links on the Witheridge FHS website, <https://www.dwyne.net/witheridge/index.htm> , which can be accessed only by WFHS Members.

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.

Facebook

Our **Witheridge** page on Facebook can be accessed, and joined, by any Witheridge or Wetheridge descendants. All are welcome to submit comments and/or photos, but these will be monitored by the Administrators, who will delete anything irrelevant or offensive.

News for Researchers

GRO cut-price certificates – good news!

In October 2017 the GRO announced a pilot test scheme, allowing some certificates of birth and death registration to be supplied electronically in .pdf format, at a cost of £6.00 each. This compares very favourably with the cost of traditional paper certificates, which currently cost £9.25 each. This pilot scheme, which had already been extended to July 2018, has now been extended further, in order to assess long-term demand. As yet, no decision has been made as to whether, or when to end the scheme. This seems to be a case of 'use it or lose it'.

To take advantage of this scheme, applications must be made online, and must include the GRO reference index. Registrations currently available cover births 1837-1917, and deaths 1837-1957. The scheme doesn't include marriage certificates, certificates later than the dates shown, overseas records, forces records, or adoption records. It is hoped that a wider range of certificates will be added to the list of those currently available in .pdf format, but modern records will not be supplied under this scheme.

The GRO aims to provide the .pdf within 5 working days of any order placed before 4pm. An email will be sent to the applicant when the certificates ordered are ready to be downloaded. Orders received after 4pm will be regarded as being received the following working day.

Additionally, the copyright restrictions on paper certificates which have the official crest and signature of the issuing authority will not apply to the .pdf format, which does not contain the crest or the signature. However, GDPR regulations do apply to both paper and pdf certificates, so permission would be needed from any living person named on the certificate, before display or publication could take place. Please note that certificates supplied in .pdf format cannot be used as evidence to support any official document or claim, so if you need to provide a certificate for official purposes, you will still need to order the standard paper certificate costing £9.25.

'Family Tree Live', April 2019

A new exhibition, organised by Family Tree Magazine and the Federation of Family History Societies (FFHS), is being held at Alexandra Palace ('Ally Pally'), London, on 26 and 27 April 2019. Associate sponsors include the Society of Genealogists (SoG). The two-day event features not only exhibition stands, but also expert speakers, workshops, a DNA hub, advice stations, and the sale of genealogy programs and stationery, all in Ally Pally's Grand Hall.

Organisations exhibiting include: Assn of Genealogists & Researchers in Archives (AGRA), British Assn for Local History, Family & Community Historical Research Society, Family Search, Federation of Family History Societies, Guild of One Name Studies, Institute of Heraldic & Genealogical Studies, Jewish Genealogical Society of GB, Living DNA, My History, MyHeritage, National Library of Wales, Pen & Sword Books, Society of Genealogists, UK BMD.

Local family history societies include: Bedfordshire FHS, Cambridgeshire FHS, Devon FHS, East of London FHS, East Surrey FHS, Hampshire FHS, Kent FHS, London, Westminster & Middlesex FHS, Midland Ancestor, Oxfordshire FHS, Peterborough & District FHS, Romany & Traveller FHS, Sussex FHS, Somerset & Dorset FHS, Wiltshire FHS, Yorkshire Group of FHSs.

Advance tickets cost (per person per day) £10.00 for Family Tree subscribers, £12.00 standard adult, and £11.00 for group bookings (10+). On-door prices are £14.00 standard adult. All children under 16 go free. Advance tickets can be bought on-line at <https://www.family-tree.co.uk/ftre/show/family-tree-live/book-now>.

News for Researchers

First World War Resource

The Imperial War Museum has recently set up a web-site, www.livesofthefirstworldwar.org. This is an invaluable resource to researchers, as it is one of the few that includes details of those who survived the war, as well as the lost. It includes nurses, conscientious objectors, and many more. Family historians can register with the website free of charge and then contribute by adding their own photos and stories about family members. This creates a memorial, whether or not the family member actually died during the First World War. There is no need to take out a paid-for subscription, as access to the Life Stories, enabling you to share images and stories, connect evidence, and prove facts, is free.

As we commemorate the centenary of the First World War Armistice, the Federation of Family History Societies is keen for us to add details to the entries for family members (not necessarily with the Witheridge name) who are named on this website. This applies to our overseas members as well, as many of them had family members who served in the First World War. Records on this site include Canadian Expeditionary Force Attestations, Commonwealth War Graves casualty records, First Australian Imperial Force Personnel Index, New Zealand Great War records and medal index card transcriptions.

Please make time to enter details of your family members as soon as possible. The aim is to fill in the blanks for all those listed on the website by 11 November 2018 and ensure they are never forgotten.

For those who wish to access the full range of over 300 million official genealogy records on the site, there is a fee of £6.00 per month, or £50.00 per year.

US Immigrant Records



Complete records of all those arriving at New York, via Castle Garden (1820-1891, pictured above) and Ellis Island (1892-1925, pictured below), along with New York Passenger and Crew lists (1925-1957), are now available to search on-line, free of charge. This excellent resource has been made available by the Church of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) on their FamilySearch website, and can be found at www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1849782. Many of us have ancestors, Witheridge or otherwise, who have apparently disappeared from records, many of whom may have migrated. While some passenger lists are now available online, the lists are far from complete. Here, at last, we have a truly comprehensive source of the 13 million people of all nationalities who arrived at New York. Although a number of our 'missing' ancestors may have travelled via New York, some probably travelled through other ports.



Also available on FamilySearch are records of passengers arriving at various ports in California, Florida, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia and Washington, as well as USA-Canada cross-border movements, and crew lists from many other places. There are also records of passengers and crew arriving in the various US states by air!

Please let our Research Co-ordinator, Kim Cook, know if you find information on any of your Witheridge ancestors who are currently on our 'missing' list.

Signing the Pledge of Loyalty Witheridges in late summer, 1723

Nowadays, the word 'loyalty' is usually associated with the word 'card', conjuring up pictures of those little squares of plastic that can be such an effective marketing tool. But for centuries loyalty - or allegiance, as it was often called - was a much more serious matter. It usually referred to loyalty to the monarch. Disloyalty was, in effect, treason, punishable by death and confiscation of all assets.

Following Henry VIII's Act separating England from papal authority, this country was one of the few in Europe that wasn't subject to rules and taxes imposed by Rome. Despite this, there were many who were angered by the split, seeing it as a rejection of the Roman Catholic faith. Henry hadn't originally intended to set up a protestant church - he'd previously persecuted English protestants, and forbidden publication of their writings - but, when pushed into a corner, Henry's only way out was to set up the Church of England.

During successive monarchies, the country swung from the Roman Catholic faith to the Church of England, and back again, causing mistrust and confusion among the populace. It's not surprising that there were plots, and suspicions of plots, over many years, and monarchs wanted to know where loyal support could be guaranteed in the event of an uprising.

From the 16th century onwards, particularly during times of unrest, the monarch required certain citizens to sign an oath of allegiance. This wasn't like signing a petition today; it was a legal declaration of loyalty to the crown, which had to be sworn on the Bible. Whatever was sworn on the Bible was sacrosanct, and a serious undertaking. Going back on your word, or your promise, made on the Bible, was in itself an offence in law. Even today, someone who promises in court to tell the whole truth, and only the truth, or who undertakes to be 'of good behaviour', can be punished by imprisonment for going back on their word. The punishment for breaking an oath of allegiance could be a very nasty death.

These oaths of allegiance were not required of everyone, but were directed, at different times, to specific sections of the population. Justices of the Peace, lawyers, merchants, Church ministers, gentry, freemen of livery companies, and everyone of status or influence in the community, were all targeted at various times. Others, including Roman Catholics, other non-conformists, and social/political agitators, were regarded as potential trouble-makers and were also required to sign the oath. Officers and men of the Royal Navy were specifically targeted between 1660 and 1661.

Those required to sign had to attend temporary courts, set up in central locations, often with a number of judges or justices in attendance. The dates and places of these temporary courts were published in advance. Mostly, the signatories were men, but there are a number of oath rolls which include the names of women.

Among these oaths were the Protestation Returns required by Parliament on 3 May 1641, compelling everyone over 18 to swear loyalty to the sovereign, the Protestant faith and the English parliament. Later the Test Act of 1673 required all those appointed to any civil or military office to swear allegiance, declaring the supremacy of the English sovereign, and receive the sacrament of Holy Communion within three months of taking office.

Another such oath was required in the late summer of 1723, and transcripts of the Devon and Exeter Oath Rolls for this period are available. Some time ago I managed to record the transcripts for Kingsbridge, Modbury, and Plympton St Mary in south Devon, and Braunton in north Devon, although there are others I've not yet seen and transcribed. A thorough search of these long and random lists produced the names of eleven Witheridges, of whom two were women. Where there are two names shown, the first is the name generally recognised, while second is the name as it was signed.

Signing the Pledge of Loyalty Witheridges in late summer, 1723

From the records I have, I've tried to identify those who signed this oath, but some uncertainty remains. If the originals, or filmed copies, were available, we might be able to compare signatures with those on other documents, such as wills, and thus come to a more definite conclusion about those who signed.

The Kingsbridge Court

This court was convened at the George Inn, Kingsbridge on 29 August 1723, before Samuel Wootton, William Ilbert, and John Fowell. No images of the George Inn at Kingsbridge have been found.

Those who attended included:

William Witheridge/Witredg of Milton South, who signed his name.

There is no baptism or marriage of a William Witheridge in South Milton that might match this entry. However, I believe this entry refers to **William Witheridge**, born c 1694, possibly in South Huish, son of **Walter** and **Sarah Witheridge**. On 29 November 1720 in South Huish, William married **Margery Tanner**, but later family events were in South Milton, which is about 3 miles from South Huish. Sadly, the early registers of South Milton are in very poor condition, and from 1717 to 1742 there are huge gaps in some of the registers, where the incumbent failed to record the required entries. No birth record has been found for William, the first son of William and Margery, who was born c 1725, and married in South Milton in 1766. Another son, Walter Witheridge, was baptised in South Milton on 16 September 1733. No burial record has yet been found for William senior, but his wife Margery (listed as Margaret) was buried in South Milton in 1758. These strong and continuing links with South Milton indicate that William, born c 1694, was almost certainly the man who signed the oath in 1723.

The Modbury Court



The following day, 30 August 1723, the Court moved to Modbury, where the justices were James Bulteel Esq (pictured), William Ilbert Esq, and Thomas Coplestone Esq. It also sat on the following day, when only James Bulteel Esq and Thomas Coplestone Esq were in attendance. James Bulteel (1676-1757) of Fleet Damerel, Holbeton, was for some years MP for Tavistock. This court was held at The Chiphouse (or could it have been Chophouse?) Chamber, also known as The Shambles Chamber. The Shambles, a Tudor-style market hall where the meat market was held, was in Church Street, but no image of the associated chamber has been found.

Those who attended included:

Elizabeth Witheridge/Witredg of Ermington, who signed her name.

The most likely candidate for this signatory is Elizabeth, wife of John Witheridge. John, who was baptised on 23 February 1652/3 in Ermington, was the son of Arthur and Mary Witheridge. We don't yet know Elizabeth's maiden name, as she came from another parish and didn't marry in Ermington. The marriage is thought to have been c1696, as their first child was baptised in Ermington on 26 December 1697. John was buried on 5 April 1721 in Ermington, when he would have been about 68, so Elizabeth would have been recently widowed, and probably signing because of the tenancies, and their influence, that had devolved to her after her husband's death.

Signing the Pledge of Loyalty Witheridges in late summer, 1723

The Plympton St Mary Court

By 3 September the Court had reached Plympton St Mary, and was convened at The George Inn (pictured), on the Ridgeway. The George Inn, listed as an 18th-century coaching inn, still exists on the Ridgeway, so descendants of the Wembury family can step back in time and visit the building where their ancestors pledged loyalty to George I. The names of the justices have not been recorded on the transcript, but could well have included some of those at Modbury.



Those who attended included:

John Witheridge of Wembury, who signed his name.

This was probably John Witheridge, son of John (1652-1721) and his wife Elizabeth Rous, who was baptised on 12 March 1692/3 in Wembury. In 1713, John married Ann Avent, and they had 5 children, 3 of whom died in infancy.

Anne Witheridge of Wembury, who made her mark.

This might have been Ann, née Avent, wife of John, but I believe it's more likely to have been John's sister Ann Witheridge, daughter of John Witheridge and Elizabeth Rous, who was baptised on 2 September 1689. In 1723 she was still single, but the manorial rolls show that she leased land in her own name, before marrying Nathaniel Willing on 9 June 1731. Manorial rolls taken immediately after her marriage refer to her as 'Ann Witheridge, now Willing'!

John Witheridge/Weatheridge of Plymstock, who signed his name.

It's not yet clear who this was. No Plymstock baptism has yet been found for a John Witheridge of the right age. It may have been John Witheridge, son of Moses and Agnes, who was baptised on 10 October 1673 in Wembury. By 1693 both his parents and three siblings had died, and there is no further record of John in Wembury. His younger brother Aaron, a mariner, settled in London, but there is no record of John there. In the 1740s in Plymstock, a John Withoridge married Elizabeth Toms, and their daughter Elizabeth Withoridge was baptised there shortly after. In the absence of any credible alternative, it's possible that John Witheridge of Wembury moved to another local parish, married, and had a son called John who married in 1740. John junior would have been too young to sign in 1723, so this could be his father. More research is needed among the many parishes in the area.

Signing the Pledge of Loyalty Witheridges in late summer, 1723

The Braunton Court



In north Devon, the Court was convened at The School House, **Braunton**. It was held over two days, 17 and 18 September 1723, before Henry Incedon Esq, and George Buck Esq. Henry Incedon (1671-1736) owned the Incedon estate on the outskirts of Braunton, where Buckland House (pictured) was the family home.

Those who attended included:

Nicholas Witheridge/Witheridg of Combe Martin, who signed his name on 17 September.

I believe this was Nicholas Witheridge, son of Nicholas Witheridge and Prudence Watts, who was baptised on 21 June 1690 in Combe Martin. Nicholas senior is believed to have died c 1708, so the man who signed the oath was probably his son.

Francis Witheridge of Combe Martin, who marked with an initial F on 17 September.

It is unclear which Francis this was. Francis Witheridge, son of Thomas Witheridge and Mary Sherman, was baptised on 22 November 1693, in Berrynarbor. However, he appears to have lived in Berrynarbor until his death in 1763, and is not known to have lived in Combe Martin. Another Francis Witheridge, son of Nicholas Witheridge and Wilmot Watts, was baptised on 16 September 1661 in Berrynarbor. He is believed to have married Mary Nutt, and had a daughter Willmot, baptised in Berrynarbor on 5 November 1693. However, it isn't known where Francis lived after that date.

Nicholas Witheridge of Ilfracombe, who marked with an initial W on 17 September.

A Nicholas Witheridge, son of Thomas Witheridge and Mary Sherman, was baptised on 24 June 1688 in Berrynarbor. Nicholas married twice, and all his children were born in Ilfracombe, including his daughter Margaret, who was baptised there on 12 August 1722, a year before Nicholas signed the oath.

Thomas Witheridge of Berrynarbor, who signed his name on 18 September.

This seems to be Thomas Witheridge, baptised on 29 December 1650 in Berrynarbor, who married on 2 January 1677/8, Mary Sherman. He was buried in Berrynarbor on 4 April 1740.

Thomas Witheridge jun of Berrynarbor, who signed his name on 18 September.

If the above interpretation is correct, this is Thomas Witheridge, son of Thomas Witheridge and Mary Sherman, who was baptised on 11 July 1683 in Berrynarbor. Thomas Witheridge junior married, on 3 January 1709, Alice Clark.

John Witheridge of Berrynarbor, who marked with an initial W on 18 September.

This was probably John Witheridge, another son of Thomas Witheridge and Mary Sherman, baptised on 19 December 1678 in Berrynarbor. He married three times, had 12 known children, and was buried in Berrynarbor on 1 August 1725, age 45. Two of his sons were also named John, but the first, baptised on 16 January 1700/1 is believed to have died young, while the second, baptised on 6 March 1715/6 was just 7 years old in 1723, and therefore too young to have signed the oath.

For further information on the range of oaths required of various people, and where records can be found, go to the National Archives website, click on 'Research Guides', and then go to 'Oaths of loyalty to the Crown and Church of England'. Devon rolls can also be found at the Friends of Devon Archives (foda) website.

Kim Cook