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## E D I T O R I A L

Greetings to all our members and apologies for delay in sending out our magazine. This is not due to lack of enthusiasm on our part, but we are still having difficulties with production and for this reason members may find that their magazines are late, or even out of sequence. We are still struggling to ensure that our member's interests are served, and we ask you to bear with us.

Since we joined the Guild of One Name Studies we have had requests for information which have sparked off further research. We have been investigating some families who married into Witheridge families, principally the Edgecombes and the Brookings, and about whom we know very little, and our Secretary, John, has received some interesting items on events connected with them. I am reluctant to commit anything to print until there is confirmation of the source, but I hope to include these later.

In this issue there is a section on 'Wills' which will be updated from time to time, but this may not be a complete index as I feel that it would not be appropriate to include any information which might embarrass or upset people still alive, although this information is available to any member of the public. Similarly we try to guard against displaying information on a family tree which might be hurtful to living people.

In spite of these small restraints we are continuing our searches, and I renew my plea for anyone with information, an article, or an item of interest to send it to me for publication.

Good luck in the pursuit of those elusive names from the past.

A G E N E A L O G I S T ' S N I G H T M A R E

Experienced by Kathy Witheridge, Ontario, Canada

My husband's grandfather was born in the small village of Little Drayton Common, Shropshire, on July 24th, 1876. His name at birth was recorded as ARTHUR AUSTIN, son of William Austin and Mary Austin (nee Barrow).

On March 3rd, 1902, ARTHUR AUSTIN (then aged 25 years) married MABEL KATE PAINTER, (then aged 20 years), daughter of Charles Painter, deceased, and Elizabeth R. Painter (nee Clutterbuck) at Hunslet, near Leeds, West Yorkshire, England.

It is not known why they decided to marry in Leeds, as Arthur came from Shropshire and Mabel came from Gloucestershire. The only apparent reason for this was Mabel's pregnancy of seven months at the time of the marriage.

I am now in possession of the birth certificates of the female children, and letters of confirmation of some of the male children's births. These records provide the following information:-

DORIS MAY AUSTIN, daughter of Arthur Austin and Mabel Kate Austin was born May 13th, 1902, at Leonard Stanley, Gloucestershire.

REGINALD ARTHUR AUSTIN was born 21st February, 1904.

MABEL KATE AUSTIN, daughter of Arthur Austin and Mabel Kate Austin (nee Painter) was born December 17th, 1905, at Little Drayton, Shropshire.

RONALD AUSTIN, son of Arthur Austin and Mabel Kate Austin (nee Painter) was born September 2nd 1907, at Little Drayton, Shropshire.

ARTHUR CHARLES AUSTIN, son of Arthur Austin and Mabel Kate Austin (nee Painter) was born October 21st, 1910, at Little Drayton, Shropshire.

During part of this era ARTHUR AUSTIN served six years with the Shropshire Light Infantry, but the dates of service are not known at this time. I have written to the Ministry of Defence in England on two occasions, enclosing two stamped addressed envelopes, but have not had the courtesy of a reply. I did hire a genealogist in Barking, Essex, to try to obtain this information on my behalf, but this venture was fruitless.

It is believed that the family emigrated to Canada between October 1910, and 1914. The next child was born in Canada, namely MARY ELIZABETH BEECH, on September 15, 1914, at Petrolia, Ontario, Canada. Her Canadian birth certificate shows her father as ARTHUR JOHN BEECH, and her mother as MABEL KATE PAINTER.

Also in my possession are Army papers for ARTHUR JOHN BEECH, dated July 29th, 1915, at which time he joined the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force. These papers give his date of birth as July 21st, 1879, and place of birth as Market Drayton, Shropshire. These papers state that he served for six years in the Shropshire Light Infantry.

It might be noted that the date of birth on the birth certificate does in fact differ by 3 years and 3 days from the date of birth on the Army papers. However, the Beech family has a bad habit of celebrating birthdays on incorrect days. Mabel Kate Beech, for example, who is still alive, celebrates her birthday on December 10th, when her birth certificate states December 17th. Also my mother-in-law, Mary Elizabeth Witheridge (nee Beech) always celebrated her birthday on September 17th, when in fact her birth certificate states September 15th.

They were also in the habit of changing Christian names. For example, Mabel Kate Beech still likes to be referred to as Mabel Katherine Josephine Beech. It is quite likely that she takes after her father, who has Arthur on his birth certificate and was always known as Arthur John in Canada.

Another record in my possession is the Canadian passport of ARTHUR.J. BEECH, which is dated June 5th 1919. This document shows his date of birth as July 21st 1876 (the same as ARTHUR AUSTIN'S birth certificate) and place of birth as Shropshire. His age was listed as 42 years at that time.

I have written to the PRO at Chancery Lane, London asking about the British Passport, or alternatively, emigration documents which they must have had to leave Britain, but they advise me that I would have to attend personally to look up this information as they do not offer assistance in research.

I have identified the time of the name change as being between October 1910 and September, 1914.

The National Archives in Ottawa, Canada, have agreed to forward Passenger Lists, on an inter-library basis, on ships arriving in Montreal and Halifax during the time period 1910-1814. Upon receipt of the micro-films - twelve in all - I will have to go through them to see if either name - Austin or Beech - appears.

MABEL KATE BEECH is 85 years old and resides in Toronto, Canada. She has never married and professes the name of Beech, although her birth certificate shows the name Austin.

I am afraid there may be a "skeleton in the closet", as when I bring up the subject of name change she is most vague in her reply. She did once tell me that she thought the name has been double-barrelled at one time

and that the Austin part had been dropped. I do not really believe this as no records show it as such. Where did Beech come from and why was the Austin part dropped? None of this makes any sense to me. Can one change one's name in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean? I do have a few more steps I can take, but all this is very expensive and time consuming. Nevertheless, I am determined to solve the mystery.

Recently I joined the Shropshire Family History Society and forwarded a description of my dilemma to them. It immediately caught the eye of one lady, and although she admitted she had little time to do research on my behalf, she couldn't resist having a "dabble". She searched the records of the King's Shropshire Light Infantry at Shrewsbury, but could find nothing. She was advised that if Arthur Austin's records were dated after 1913, they could possibly have been destroyed as they were kept in Hayes, near London. It was thought that perhaps the PRO at Kew might be able to advise. If, as believed, Arthur Austin emigrated to Canada in 1912, then the date of his British Army Service must have been prior to 1913.

It was once put to me that the children might not have had the same father, but all the dates and place of birth seem to refute this theory.

Some time ago, I obtained a piece of paper from the home of my husband's late mother, the child born in Canada. On the paper it stated that the family emigrated to Canada between 1910 and 1912 having sailed on either the Cunard ship "Melita", or the "Valcartier". There was a notation "A.W.O.L", which I understand to mean "Absent without Leave". This may be a clue!

I still have to look through the twelve micro-films to see if I can find which side of the ocean the name change took place. Should anyone be able to offer other ideas, I would greatly appreciate hearing from you.



"LOST"

RICHARD WITHERIDGE

For some time we have been seaching for the birth record of RICHARD WITHERIDGE, who died in Shipley, Yorkshire, on the 18th November, 1961, aged 80. He married Emma Schofield circa 1902 and was the father of Lilian, Rose, Richard, Ernest, Annie, Alice, Henry, Hilda, Arthur and Albert.

We are seeking his parentage, and the location and date of his birth. The Editor would welcome any information.

"FOUND"

Kim reports that she has found the parentage of:-

JAMES WITHERIDGE born 14th January, 1844. He was the son of Thomas Witheridge, Farmer, and Ann Moore Witheridge of Bradworthy.

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GRO CERTIFICATES HELD - ADDITIONAL SINCE MAY, 1991

Christian Name(s)

<u>Births</u>	<u>Witheridge</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Via</u>
Isabella	Annie	04.02.1881	Newport, Hon.	006
Joseph	Fred	21.06.1881	Plymouth	006

Marriage

James		11.11.1871	Newport, Hon.	006
James		15.06.1872	Barnstaple	006

## G R A N D F A T H E R ' S      C H I S E L

By Bob Thomas

One of my childhood memories is of my mother telling me that she had once managed to put a wood chisel right through her hand, and my father had poured a whole bottle of iodine over it, and it had healed perfectly. (She was probably trying to persuade me to take some medicine!) Like many ladies of her generation she had been taught wood carving. Later I inherited that chisel.

I still have it, and despite a vast amount of work, it is still my favourite, a beautiful tool, it keeps its edge, and has a fine octagonal handle, still clearly marked with my grandfather's name - F.R. Witheridge.

He died in 1899, long before I was thought of, but I like to think that some of its work will live on for many years, as one of my tasks before retiring was to refurbish an old, long derelict car, appropriately also of 1899. This involved some wood carving, making a footboard support to match one still existing which was carved with a scroll design. This car, once raced by a then famous driver, is the Canstatt Daimler, now preserved in the Daimler-Benz Museum in Germany.

I feel sure grandfather would approve.

Incidentally, his talents must persist. My mother was quite a capable woodworker, and took an active interest in things mechanical, as does her granddaughter, my niece in the nursing profession, who can't resist finding out how things work, and is quite good at all sorts of repairs!

A WITHERIDGE WIDOW

I see it all,  
I know it's true,  
He spends less time  
With me than you.  
In a short time,  
Your secretary he became,  
I know how it is,  
But Oh! what a shame!

For hours he pores  
Over clues and books  
In search of dates  
Through papers he looks  
To match a clue.  
I can see it's fun  
To unearth the things  
That they have done.

To match a son  
To someone's Dad,  
Finding out things  
That someone had.  
I wish I had  
Him, back in mind,  
Without his files,  
Without his finds.

DON'T GET ME WRONG,  
DO NOT BLAME ME,  
FOR HOW I WISH  
HE'D RESEARCH MY TREE! - Mayda Witheridge

## WAS THERE ANYONE IN CELL BLOCK "H"?

By Joyce Browne

If there is anyone harbouring a suspicion that a "lost" ancestor might have been a guest of H.M. Government, I can set his or her mind at rest - at least concerning one particular time and one specific place.

On the night of Sunday, 3rd April, 1881, Census night, 1,054 persons were within the grim walls of H.M. Prison, Princetown, Dartmoor. The prison was built partly at the instigation of Sir Thomas Tyrrwhit, a local magnate, during the Napoleonic Wars to contain French prisoners who were housed in prisons and on prison ships at Plymouth. They can hardly have appreciated the transfer from Plymouth since they had to be marched some sixteen miles over the roughest terrain in Devonshire to reach Princetown which is known for the worst climatic conditions in the County. It has a high rainfall, bitterly cold winds, fog and snow. Railway engines have been known to disappear up to the smoke chimney in snow!

Sir Thomas was determined to promote the prosperity of the moor, but in spite of his efforts to make Princetown a centre of local agriculture and industry it really only existed to serve the prison. When the Prison was closed in 1816 and fell into disrepair, Princetown declined, but revived with the coming of a railway and the re-opening of the prison in 1850.

Of the 1,054 persons inside the walls on Census night, 1881, eleven were female. They were the wives, children and servants of the Governor and his Deputy and his Steward. Of the males, 48, including the Governor and his Deputy, were officials, warders and staff and the rest were prisoners, including a man of 74.

Every trade and occupation was represented, some styled simply as "Thief". They came from far and wide, but I'm glad to say, no Witheridge was among them.

The name was not unknown, however, as outside the walls, living in "The New Buildings", were Richard Witheridge, aged 40 a "store keeper at H.M. Prison" and his wife Eliza. His older children, Francis, aged 15, Hester aged 12, and William aged 9, were born at Buckland Monachorum, but the youngest, Eliza aged 3, was born at Princetown.

One other connection with the prison emerged from the search of this 1881 Tavistock Census - at Whistley Down Farm, Buckland Monachorum, Thomas Witheridge aged 48, was living, and he was described as "Farmer - 50 acres, and Pensioner from H.M. Convict Service."

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S A D   D A Y S   I N   S U F F O L K

Seen in the Parish Registers of Wortham, Suffolk:-

Burials 5th January, 1850

John Flatman, aged 35

Zecharias Hawes of Palgrave

"These two men were killed at Eye by the wheels of Farmer Meadow's waggon passing across them when in a state of intoxication.

"My church was never so filled as upon this occasion. Oh, if man would but come for the Word of Life, instead of morbid curiosity, happy would they be."

Burial 28th April 1850

John Flatman, aged 1 year, "...only son of John Flatman who was killed 5th January"

PPR WILLS AND ADMONS - WITHERIDGE AND VARIANTS

1936 onwards

- 1936 Wetherldge, William Alfred, of 43 Kingsley Road, Forest Road, Walthamstow, Essex, died 1 July 1936 at Whipps Cross Hospital, Leytonstone, Essex. (Age 66) Probate London 26 August to Charles Joseph Louis, compositor.
- 1937 Witheridge, Alfred William, of 12 Waterloo Street, Weston-super Hare, died 22 February 1937 (Age 88) Admon (with will) Bristol 14 May to Arthur Witheridge, company director.
- 1938 Witheridge, Arminal, of 6 Wentworth Villas, Plymouth, spinster, died 4 January, 1938. (Age 88) Probate Bodmin 29 January to Harold George Edgar Cross, retired contractor.  
Witheridge, William John, of 5 Railway Cottages, Otterham Camelford, Cornwall, died 16 Mlarch 1938 (Age 64) Admon Bodmin 30 April to Maud Witheridge, widow.
- 1939 Witheridge, Thomas Hardwick, of Braeside, Friars Walk, Chase Side, Southgate, Middx, died 14 February 1939. (Age 62) Admon (with will) London 4 April to Rosa Maud Witheridge, widow.  
Witheridge, William Henry, of 5 Hurlingham Gardens, Hurlingham, London, died 18 April, 1939 (Age 68) Probate London 30 May to Percy Oliver Davis, certified accoountant, and Horace Owen Driver, solicitor.
- 1940 No Wetheridge or Witheridge entries.
- 1941 Witheridge, Eva, of 33 Belgrave Road, Torquay, Devon, spinster, died 27 January 1941 (Age 85) Probate Exeter 24 February to Thomas Rogers, china and hardware dealer.  
Witheridge, Frederick Arthur, of 14 Fernleigh Avenue, Bridgwater, Somerset died 2 May 1941 (Age 74) Probate Llandudno 15 July to Lydia Witheridge, widow.

- 1942 Witheridge, Mary Ellen, of 30 Admiralty Street, Keyham, Devonport, spinster, died 21 February, 1942 at Thornbury, Glos. (Age 79) Probate Bodmin 26 May to Stanley Horace Harris, Chief Petty Officer, RN.
- 1943 Witheridge, George Thomas, of 8 Brunswick Place, Plymouth, died 23 January, 1943 (Age 75) Probate Llandudno 15 March to George Philip Witheridge, boilermaker, H.M. Dockyard.
- 1944 Witheridge, James Deacon, 12 Gilbert Grove, Ilfracombe, Devon, died 9 November 1943 on war service (born 1916) Probate Llandaff 26 April to Barbara Alice Witheridge, widow.
- 1945 Witheridge, Ada Florence, of 4-back-of-90 Peel Street, Birmingham 18 (wife of Arthur Witheridge) died 17 February, 1943 (Age 55) Admon Birmingham 18 April to the said Arthur Witheridge, railway carriage cleaner.
- Witheridge, Joseph Edwin, of The Nest, Hewish, Somerset, died 10 May, 1944 at Crandon House, Temple Cloud, Somerset (Age 77) Admon Bristol 15 January to Mary Ellen Witheridge, widow.
- Witheridge, Mary Ellen, of 9 Osborne Road, Weston-super-Mare, widow, died 8 September, 1945 (Age 75) Admon Bristol 17 October to Ellen Catherine Gouldstone, wife of Walter John Gouldstone.
- 1946 No Witheridge or Wetheridge entries.
- 1947 Witheridge, Arthur Stanley, of 54 Hill Park Crescent, Plymouth, died 28 February, 1947 (Age 57) Admon Bodmin 3 May to Gwendoline Norah Witheridge, widow.
- Witheridge, Charles Inwood, of 68 New John Street West, Birmingham, died 16 July 1947 at the General Hospital, Birmingham (Age 68) Admon Birmingham 24 August to George Frederick Witheridge, packer, and Albert Witheridge, woodworker.
- Witheridge, Stanley Lewis, of 40 Headland Park, Plymouth, died 28 June 1946 (Age 43) Admon (with will) Exeter 20 November to Albert Charles Hepper Cowell, civil servant.
- 1948 No Wetheridge or Witheridge entries.

- 1949 Witheridge, Hester Agnes, of 67 Minchenden Crescent Southgate, Middx. spinster, died 25th April 1949 at Onslow House, Chase Side, Southgate (Age 80) Probate London 19 November to Eliza Frances Witheridge, spinster.
- 1950 Witheridge, Arthur John, of 6 Charlemont Road, Walsall, Staffs, died 26 August at the General Hospital, Walsall (Age 66) Probate Birmingham 23 November to Arthur Ernest Witheridge, company director, and Leslie Richard Witheridge, works manager.
- 1951 Witheridge, Hannah, of Roseville, Moreton-in-Marsh, Glos. widow, died 28 May 1951 (Age 97) Probate Oxford 4 September to Louisa Fanny Potter, widow, and Olive Fremlin Gray (wife of Frederick Harold Gray)  
Witheridge, Henry Albert, of 4 Wellington Terrace Clifton, Bristol, died 17 April 1951 (Age 76) Admon Bristol 15 June to Elizabeth Witheridge, widow.
- 1952 Witheridge, Gladys Mabel, of 30 Adelaide Street, Stonehouse, Plymouth, died 10 November 1952 (Age 44) Admon Bodmin 23 December to Mabel Ethel Witheridge, widow.  
Witheridge, John Edward, of 38 Osborne Road, Weston-super-Mare, died 13 June at the General Hospital, Weston-super-Mare (Age 79) Admon Bristol 30 July to Ellen Witheridge, widow.  
Witheridge, John James, of 46 Elm Road, Mannamead, Plymouth, died 29 November 1951 (Age 55) Admon Bodmin 21 January to Lily Witheridge, widow.
- 1953 Witheridge, Florence Eliza, of 24 Paignton Road, South Tottenham, London N15 (wife of Philip Witheridge) died 3 November 1952 at North Middlesex Hospital (Age 75) Admon London 24 January to the said Philip Witheridge, retired almoner.
- 1954 Witheridge, Ellen, of 38 Osborne Road, Weston-super-Mare, widow, died 4 October, 1954 at Drove Road Hospital, Weston-super-Mare (Age 80) Probate Exeter 15 November to Ernest Witheridge, welfare superintendent.



- 1954 Witheridge, Harry, of Keaton, Ermington, Ivybridge, Devon, died 16 October, 1954 (Age 79) Admon London 2 December to Annie Maud Wyatt Witheridge, widow.  
Witheridge, Philip, of 28 Paignton Road, London N15, died 11 May 1954 at Wolverton Bucks (Age 83) Probate London 29 June to Frank Wilkerson, certified accountant.
- 1955 Witheridge, George Henry, of Exeter City Hospital, Exeter, died 29 June, 1954 (Age 89) Admon Llandaff 25 July to Elizabeth Thompson, spinster.  
Witheridge, Gwendoline, of 9 Berkely Road, Hornsey, London, spinster, died 11 March 1955 at Whittington Hospital, Archway Road, Highgate, London (Age 62) Probate London 25 June to Barclay's Bank, Ltd.  
Witheridge, Henrietta, of 63 Barton Avenue, Ford, Plymouth, spinster, died 23 November, 1954 (Age 92) Probate Exeter 19 January to Charles Frederick Paradise, retired carpenter, and Frederick Peters Luckhurst, retired accountant.  
Witheridge or Woodridge, William George, of 31 Jones Street, Newport, Monmouth, died 5 November 1955 (Age 81) Admon Llandaff 12 December to Arthur Stanley Woodridge, farm labourer.
- 1956 No Wetheridge or Witheridge entries
- 1957 Witheridge, Florence Mary, Cay Ellen, Worlebury Park Road, Weston-super-Mare, spinster, died 10 June 1957. (Age 67) Probate Bristol 30 October to Joseph Albert Farley, optical practitioner.  
Witheridge, Mary Elizabeth, of 28 Calthorpe Road, Birmingham 20, spinster, died 3 February 1957 at 1 Western Road Birmingham 18. (Age 89) Admon (with will) Birmingham 7 March to Alfred Eyles, jewellery engraver, Leonard Eyles, manufacturer, and Sydney Eyles, chemist.  
Witheridge, Matilda Mary Ann, 26 Palmersfield Road, Banstead, Surrey, widow, died 29 June 1957 at the Shrubbery, Bitchet Green, Sevenoaks, Kent (Age 88) Admon London 1 August, to Doris Mary Pearce, widow.

- 1957 Witheridge, William Thomas, of 37 Stanbury Avenue, Fishponds, Bristol, died 3 January 1957 at Barrow Hospital, Barrow Gurney, near Bristol (Age 53) Admon Bristol 6 March to Reuben William Witheridge, retired foreman horsekeeper.
- 1958 Witheridge, Eliza Frances, of 67 Minchenden Crescent, Southgate, Middx, spinster, died 26 August at Highlands Hospital Southgate (Age 80) Probate London 27 October to Barclays Bank Ltd.
- Witheridge, Elizabeth, of 4 Wellington Terrace, Clifton, Bristol, widow, 'died 30 April, 1958 at Manor Park Hospital, Bristol. (Age 81) Probate Bristol 23 June to George Pownall Atkinson, solicitor.
- Witheridge, Gladys Violet Elizabeth, of The Exeter Inn, Ashburton, Devon (wife of Frederick John Witheridge) died 27 January 1958 at Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital (Age 52) Admon Exeter to Midland Bank Executor & Trustee Co., Ltd.
- Witheridge, Harold Ernest, of 3 Beverley Road, Chiswick, Middx, died 17 August 1958 at West Middlesex Hospital, Isleworth (Age 55) Admon London 21 October to May Isabel Witheridge, widow.
- Witheridge, Henry Arthur Frederick, Otherwise Henry Arthur, of 94 Sydenham Road, Bridgwater, Somerset, died 3 March 1958 (Age 67) Probate Exeter 9 April to Gordon Gratton, grocery manager.
- Witheridge, Stanley, of Greenwith, Perranwell Station, Truro, died 20 June 1958 at Royal Cornwall Infirmary, Truro (Age 49) Admon Bodmin 21 August to Phyllis Doreen Witheridge, widow.
- 1959 Witheridge, Lydia, of 14 Fernleigh Avenue, Bridgwater, Somerset, widow, died 16 December, 1958 (Age 79) Probate Carmarthen 19 February to Dorothy Mary Marks and Winifred Ellen Marks, spinsters.
- 1960 Wetheridge, Arthur James, otherwise Arthur, of 14 Blancedown, Denmark Hill Estate, SE5 died 30 November 1959 at Dulwich Hospital, E Dulwich, London (Age 57) Admon London 27 January to Esther Witheridge, widow.
- 1960 onwards to be continued later

## USEFUL ADDRESSES

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Devon Family History Society,  
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PL2 2LP

Society of Genealogists, (Tel.No. 01-251-8799)  
14 Charterhouse Buildings, London EC1

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