



Volume 7

Number 3

Autumn 1993

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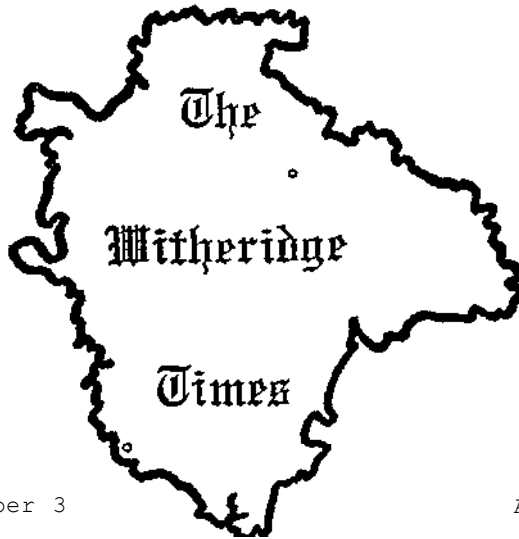
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## E D I T O R I A L

Greetings to all our readers for Autumn, 1993.

In this edition we are pleased to include the names of four new members and their families from places as far apart as Croydon Surrey, Wales, Western Australia and Vancouver, Canada. Welcome to the Witheridge Society!

We are delighted too, to have received information and contributions from members in Australia and New Zealand and Canada - keep up the good work!

It was particularly interesting to see the birth certificates from Perth, Western Australia, which feature in the 'Tangled Tavistock' article in this edition. I was surprised at the amount of detail, compared with British certificates, required to register a birth. The Australian form gives date and place of birth, name, sex, then 'whether present at registration or not' The Registrar is being asked whether he/she actually saw the child - one wonders at the official thinking behind that, and one or two possibilities come to mind.

Under the heading 'Father' the applicant is required to state 'When and Where Married', 'Previous issue living and deceased' - which strikes me as odd as this information is not required of the mother, and the answer might, not be the same in both cases. I think there might be some who would object to this on the grounds of invasion of privacy.

The column 'Mother' gives the name, age and birthplace of the mother. The column headed 'Witness' asks for the name of the Accoucheur, the 'Nurse by whom certified' and the 'names of Occupiers or other Witnesses'. There ought not to be any babies mixed up in Perth.

Oh that we had access to all this information in Britain! I admit that I am envious of the researchers in Australia.

Here, research continues. We have obtained some certificates to try to finalise thinking on some 'problem' families whose trees have never been published. Namely, one of the Plymouth families whose first known member is William, a seaman, born circa 1836, the Totnes/Newton Abbot family whose first known ancestor is another William, married in Kingsbridge in 1842. (We know that some of this family is now established at Hemsby, Norfolk, and appears in the indexes as being at Great Yarmouth.) The third family Philip has called the 'Bridgwater/Swansea/Bedwelty' family,

and their ancestor is also a William, born circa 1830. You can see why we are having trouble.

If you know anything about these families do please let me, or Philip Witheridge, have the information.

From our contemporary families we are sorry to have to report sad news as you will see in the 'Family News' section. Whatever the news is - do please keep it coming.

*Loyce*

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#### FAMILY NEWS

It is with regret that I have to inform our members that our Honorary Member, Mrs. Ellen Witheridge, ('Blossom' to her friends and relations) of Collaroy in New South Wales, Australia, passed away on the 27th May, 1993.

Ellen, (104 years old this year), was the widow of Philemon Thomas Witheridge, and mother of member Mrs. Phyllis Cocking. Our heart felt condolences go out to Phyllis and her daughters Mrs. Doreen Chick, Mrs. Judith Hayes, Mrs. Fay Driver and Mrs. Janet Debski, and also to Ellen's great grandchildren and great great grandchildren.

"Promoted to glory and re-united with loved ones"

God bless you all

John Witheridge

---

(It is good to think that the Society was able to send congratulations to Ellen on her 104th birthday)

Editor

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We send our sympathy to Kathy and Paul Witheridge of Sarnia, Ontario, Canada. Kathy's mother, who has been in poor health for some time, died in July at her home in Yorkshire.

---

## FIRE DOWN BELOW!

### THE GREAT FIRE AT PLYMOUTH DOCKYARD, 1840

By John Witheridge

This article was written from memory of some notes made as the original press cutting was being read. The picture is a photocopy of the engraving as it was published in a contemporary newspaper. I give many thanks to the Northmore Family research team.

Sunday, the 27th September, 1840 - a date that will go down in local history, with a feeling of loss and of memorable scenes of destruction. In those days, there was no early closing of the Yard on a Saturday, and when the working parties left on the night of the 26th, everything seemed to be in perfect order. At 6.0 p.m. a report that "All was safe" was made by Mr. Spiers, carpenter of the 74 gun "Talavera". This ship, which was lying in Head Dock, had been laid down at Woolwich Dockyard as the "Thunderer", but was re-named "Talavera" in July 1917 before being launched on the 15th October, 1818.

The Captain of the Guard made his rounds at 3.0 a.m., on the 27th, and still nothing appeared amiss, but at 4.15, a Police Officer on duty suddenly observed smoke issuing from the bow portholes of the "Talavera" and the alarm was raised. The fire fighting equipment of the Yard was quite inadequate to cope with the fire, but soon men of the 11th, 53rd, and 65th Regiments of the Royal Artillery, and the Royal Marines appeared with their engines. The Devonport Town engine and the West of England Insurance Company engine from Plymouth also attended. It was stated that the floating engines in the "Ordinary" were brought to take up positions outside the Dock. In all there were 36 engines - all manuals of course, but this fine array of the area's best was practically powerless to cope with the raging inferno.

Within 17 minutes of the discovery of the smoke, some dockside sheds and a large quantity of timber stacked along the wharves were one entire mass of flame. In the stern dock to the rear of that in which the "Talavera" lay, was the "Minden", another 74 gun ship launched in Bombay dockyard on the 19th June, 1810. Parallel to the Head and Stern Docks was South No.1 Dock in which the 28 gun sixth rate "Imogene" was lying. The fire spread to the roof over the South Dock and by 5.15 a.m., both the ship and the roof were a mass of flame.

Great efforts were made to prevent the fire, which had caught the bowsprit and figurehead of the "Minden", from getting a greater hold and destroying this ship. Although an order had been given to abandon ship, the ship's company refused, and stuck to the task in hand, eventually gaining control of the fire and saving the ship.

Other courageous work was done by some of the Dockyard shipwrights who threw baulks of timber into the waters of the dock, and standing on them beside the burning ship, cut holes in the hull which enabled the rising tide to enter the ship and put out the flames below decks.

The "Imogene" launched at Pembroke Dock on 24th June, 1831, and the "Talavera" were both destroyed, but the "Minden" survived the fire and in April, 1842, was converted into a hospital ship.

Great fears were entertained for the rigging house, which if set alight might then have involved the whole Yard, but the fire was prevented from spreading to this building.

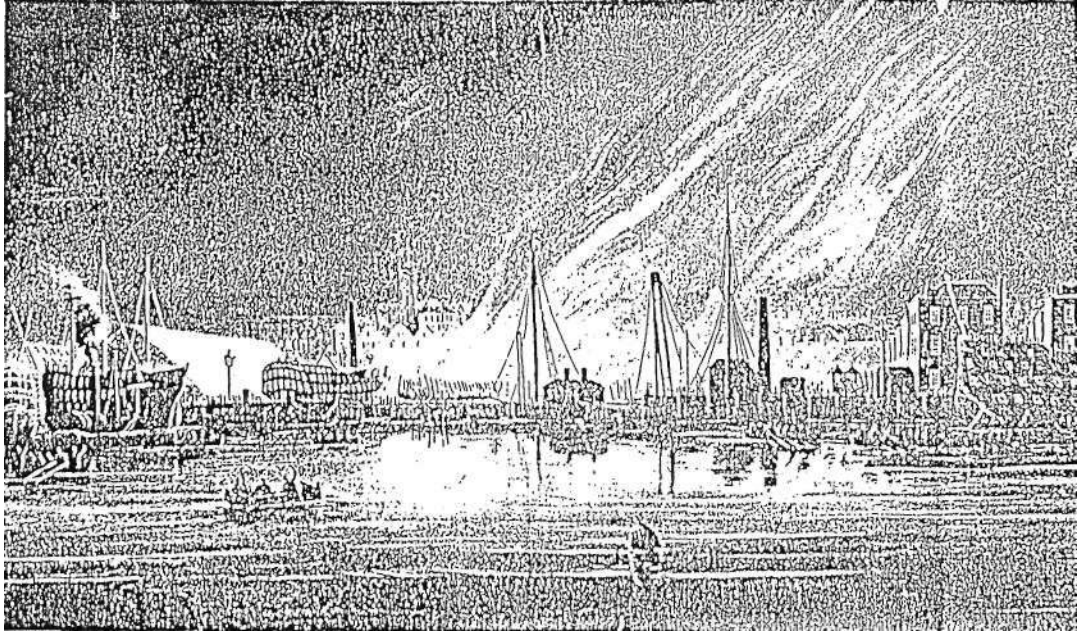
Amongst the buildings which were destroyed on the dockside was the Adelaide Gallery. This building was named after Queen Adelaide, wife of William IV, and was the feature attraction for all visitors to the dockyard establishment. It had been erected in 1826 as a shipwrights' shop, but Captain C.B.H. Ross. C.B., Superintendent of the Yard, set it aside as a museum for housing a fine collection of ships' figureheads and similar trophies of the Navy. In the Gallery was a Sphinx brought home in the "Talavera" and intended for the British Museum. This memorial, which had recently been rescued from the sands of Egypt, and reputed to be over 3,000 years old, was destroyed in the fire.

Most of the ships' figureheads were destroyed, also the flag that floated over Nelson, when he fell at Trafalgar, and the flag of Lord Exmouth at the taking of Algiers.

The irony of fate was exemplified by the destruction of the capstan of the "Royal George" which had been submerged since the ship foundered at Spithead in August 1782. After its recovery it was deposited in the Adelaide Gallery, only to be destroyed by fire.

There was talk at the time that the fire was due to arson, and some of the circumstances seemed to point that way, but nothing of the kind was ever proved.

There were Witheridge families living in the area at this time. I wonder if any of them helped to extinguish the flames? I would like to think that they did.



*The Great Fire of 1840*



## MEMORIES FROM ONTARIO

By Ruby Jackman

My father (Richard Witheridge December 21st 1867 - May 22nd, 1952, son of Richard and Ann Witheridge, nee Jeffrey) said very little about his family, and we did not probe either. We knew that Dad had a brother William who had died, as well as his parents, so the only grandparent we knew on Dad's side of the family was our step grandmother, whom we loved dearly. Yes, our grandmother, Emma Plummer, was a fine woman. The type of lady that we would all dream of as our grandmother.

Sometimes Dad would talk about the days when he worked with his father on the Grand Trunk Railroad, later known as the Canadian National Railroad. In later life he was as the photograph shows, a teamster, self employed with his own rig and team. I have his Journals that record his work during the years 1897 until the early 1900's. Throughout this period his records show that he transported furniture, coal, gravel and grain from Bowmanville harbour to various persons or companies. At times he would use his team to draw harrows and ploughs, while he cultivated various gardens and larger plots of land. Dad was a fine gardener, he loved the soil. He always tended our plot and at times he would cultivate an extra plot as well as our own.

One of my most vivid recollections is from the time when my father was a freight agent for the Canadian National Railroad in Bowmanville. When the depression hit Canada in 1929 Dad was forced to retire early. Mother, with her capability to handle food that was provided from Dad's garden, never allowed any of us to go hungry.

Dad loved to play games with us in the evenings. He was good at spelling, and indeed was a very good writer. He taught me his own method of subtraction which I still use, much to the horror of my husband and my daughter, both of whom are excellent mathematicians.

When I look back, much to my regret my sister and I never lived, close enough to be able to give help to Dad and Mother when they needed us. We lived in St. Catherine's and my sister in Ottawa. We did manage to keep Dad's garden fairly well cultivated when we went home each month. For many years my sister and I would spend our summers at home. We would have berries to pick, lawns to cut and many other tasks to perform. Mother was unable to care for Dad and care for the garden.

Finally, the Doctor asked that our father be placed in hospital. He was not a good patient. We were told that Dad must have suffered a slight stroke during his last days at home, and no one had realised. Dad died on 22nd May, 1952, at Bowmanville and is buried in the Town Cemetery.

Richard Witheridge Junior with his team



FROM COLLAROY, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA COMES A CHILDHOOD  
MEMORY OF ENGLAND

Mrs. Phyllis Cocking remembers Mary Elizabeth Witheridge, born 1807, who married Walter Jukes in 1913. (See CombeMartin/Berrynarbor/Helston tree Magazine Volume 7, Number 1, Spring 1993) This couple were Phyllis's favourite uncle and aunt, and lived next door to Phyllis when the families lived in Swansea. Phyllis remembers her aunt and uncle taking her to the Salvation Army Meeting on a Sunday. Walter would give her a ride on his walking stick; he would hold it out in front and carry Phyllis all the way. Phyllis was five or six years old at the time.

UNTANGLING TANGLED TAVISTOCK!

By John Witheridge

From the information we had to hand when we published the provisional Tavistock family tree in the Witheridge Times, Volume 5 No.2. Summer 1991, we could see that the family ties were unusually close (Australian section, left hand side).

Alfred Percy Witheridge, born Tavistock 1855, had married his niece, Polly Witheridge, born Tavistock 1863, in Australia in 1879. This gave rise to some romantic speculations, and to questions about their children, but now, thanks to much work on the part of our member Mrs. Margery Florence Streatfield - "Flo" to her friends, I am able to present some new facts and begin to unravel the skein.

Here is a shortened version of the family tree of Alfred Percy and Polly Witheridge, who were married at the Bible Christian Manse, Adelaide, South Australia, in 1879.

**John Phillips Witheridge, born circa 1805**

**= married circa 1835, Jane Percy born circa 1812**

1-Richard bc 1835 m.Tavistock 1861	= Mary Ann Hatherly
	bc 1845
2-John Phillips bc 1837	
	1-William Percy b 1861
3-George Edwin b 1840	d 1866
	2-Polly b 1863 Tavistock
4-William b 1844	m 1879 Adelaide =
	3-Marion b 1865
5-William Percy b 1846	
6-Mary b 1848	
7-Anne b 1850	
8-Alfred Percy b 1855 Tavistock	.
m 1879	.

At this point I will deviate from the tree itself to disprove some past theories. It was assumed that Polly and Alfred knew each other when they lived in the Tavistock area. This may have been so in the case of Alfred knowing Polly, but I very much doubt if Polly could call Alfred to mind when they met in Australia some years later. The following proves my point:-

Shipping Records sent from Australia

Ship: Prince of Wales

Left England 21st July 1866. Arr. Adelaide 17th Oct. 1866

Passengers:	Richard Witheridge	age 30 years
	Anne	" age 28 "
	Polly	" age 2 "
	Marion	" age infant

Ship: The Earl Dalhousie

Left Plymouth 20th Oct.1873. Arr.Adelaide 12th Jan. 1874

Passengers:	Alfred Witheridge	age 18 years
	Anne	" age 22 "

This totally dispels any romantic theories that Alfred and Polly knew each other and travelled the world to be together. If you read the dates you will see that Polly was only two years of age when she left Tavistock for Australia, and when Alfred left England Polly was still only eight or nine years old. A young man of eighteen would hardly chase around the world for an eight or nine year old niece. This puts the early part of their relationship into a very ordinary perspective, but I don't think that this will continue for more than a few years.

In the next section of this report I shall have to demolish a few more myths and mythsters, and I ask you to look at the certificates which are reproduced on succeeding pages.

Alfred Percy Witheridge married Polly Witheridge, 1879

Children from this marriage -

- 1-George born 9th Dec. 1879 See certificate, informant Polly living at Brighton
- 2-William Henry b 10th Dec.1881. See cert. Informant Polly living at Mitcham
- 3-Albert b 24th May 1884. See cert. Informant Annie Witheridge Aunt. Living at Mitcham
- 4-Alfred Richard b 1888 - no record as yet.
- 5-Emma Edith b 1891/2 (died 1892 Coburg, Victoria. Registration Number 1304)
- 6-John Percy b 23rd Jan. 1899 See cert. Informant Polly Living at Denmark near Albany.
- 7-Cecil Charles b 1900 No cert as yet.
- 8-John b 11th June 1903 See Cert. Informant Polly, living at Victoria St. Cottesloe Beach.

1879		Married in the District of Adelaide						
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Trade or Calling.	Residence at Time of Marriage.	Name and Residence of Father of each party.	Place in which celebrated.
	October 17 <sup>th</sup>	Alfred Percy	23	Single	Labourer	Adelaide	John Percy	Belle Chantry Mawson
	1879	Polly Withnidge	18	Spinster		Adelaide	Richard Withnidge	Adelaide

This Marriage was celebrated between us *Alfred Percy* and *Polly Withnidge*

In the presence of us *Richard Withnidge* and *Ch. G. Baker*

Name.	Trade or Calling.	Residence.
<i>Richard Withnidge</i>	<i>Labourer</i>	<i>Adelaide</i>
<i>Ch. G. Baker</i>		<i>Adelaide</i>

The above-named *Alfred Percy* and *Polly Withnidge* were duly married by or before me, at the time and place above-named, and in the presence of witnesses whose signatures are above written

Witness my hand this *18<sup>th</sup>* day of *October* 1879


*Joshua Foster*  
Assisting Minister

BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES REGISTRATION OFFICE  
ADELAIDE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

April 15 '93

I hereby certify that this is a true copy of an Entry in a Register kept in this office in the State of South Australia. Given under my hand and seal

*G. J. Baker*  
Principal Registrar.



January 2 1879		District of Adelaide							
Male No.	Female, if any.	Sex.	Name and Surname of Father.	Name and Maiden Surname of Mother.	Rank of Profession of Father.	Actual, Estimated, and Inferred Age in Years.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar General.	Name of Place of Registration or Birth.
9000 1879		M	<i>not stated</i>	<i>Polly Withnidge</i>			<i>born</i>	<i>Jan 2 1879</i>	<i>A. Postgate</i>

Entered at the General Registry Office, this *19<sup>th</sup>* day of *January* 1879


*Edw. H. Maitland*  
Deputy Registrar.

BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES REGISTRATION OFFICE  
ADELAIDE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

Jan 22 '93

I hereby certify that this is a true copy of an Entry in a Register kept in this office in the State of South Australia. Given under my hand and seal

*G. J. Baker*  
Principal Registrar.





# BIRTH IN THE STATE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

No.	CHILD			PARENTS		INFORMANT	WITNESS	REGISTRAR		Name, if added after Registration of Birth	
	When and where born.	Name and whether present at Registration or not.	Sex.	FATHER				MOTHER	When registered and where.		Signature of District Registrar.
				Name and Surname, Rank or Profession of the Father, Age, and Birth-place.	When and Where married, Previous Name being and descent.			Name and Maiden Surname of the Mother, Age, and Birth-place.			
1	11th June 1909 Victoria Street Cottesloe Beach	John Present	Male	1. Alfred Witheridge 2. Railwayman 3. 15 years 4. Oatley Devonshire England	1. 10th November 1879 2. Adelaide 3. South Australia 4. 29 years 5. 17 years 6. 15 years 7. 4 years 8. 2 years 9. 1 year 10. 1 female	1. Polly Witheridge 2. 29 years 3. Inverloch 4. Devonshire England	1. Polly Witheridge 2. Kitchen 3. Victoria Street 4. Cottesloe Beach	1. Douglas B. Darbyshire 2. Mr. B. Loud 3. Elizabeth Semant 4. Alfred Witheridge	22nd July 1909 Cottesloe	Anna E. Emmens 	

REG. No. *4117*  
C. of B. No. 4117  
(See V. 16, Sections 12 and 17—Sch. 2)

## CERTIFIED COPY OF REGISTER OF BIRTH

1899 BIRTHS in the *Plantagenet* District of Western Australia, Registered by *E. D. Keyser*, District Registrar.

No.	CHILD			PARENTS		INFORMANT	WITNESS	REGISTRAR		Name, if added after Registration of Birth	
	When and where born.	Name and whether present at Registration or not.	Sex.	FATHER				MOTHER	When registered and where.		Signature of District Registrar.
				Name and Surname, Rank or Profession of the Father, Age, and Birth-place.	When and Where married, Previous Name being and descent.			Name and Maiden Surname of the Mother, Age, and Birth-place.			
411	1899 January 23rd Donniark near Albany	John Percy Not present	Male	1. Alfred Witheridge 2. Labourer 3. 38 4. Oatley St. Mary England	1. 10th November 1879 2. Adelaide 3. Living 4. 29 years 5. 17 years 6. 15 years 7. 4 years 8. 2 years 9. 1 year 10. 1 female	1. Polly Witheridge 2. nee Witheridge 3. 36 years 4. Inverloch 5. Devonshire England	1. Polly Witheridge 2. no writing 3. Mother 4. Donniark 5. W. C.	1. Dr. Bolus Gray 2. m. B. 755 3. Elizabeth Semant 4. Alfred Witheridge	1899 St. Marys 28th Albany	<i>Edw. Keyser</i>	

When Born	Name, M. or F.	Sex	Name and Residence of Father	Name and Maiden Residence of Mother	Rank or Profession of Father	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant	When Registered	Signature of Assistant Registrar	Name of School after Registration of Birth
1881 Dec 10 <sup>th</sup>	William Henry	M	Alfred Withersidge	Polly Withersidge formerly Withersidge	Laborer	Polly Withersidge mother of child Withersidge	18 <sup>th</sup> 6 <sup>th</sup>	H. Taylor	

Entered at the General Registry Office, this

7<sup>th</sup>

day of January

1882

*John H. Taylor*  
Deputy Registrar.

BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES REGISTRATION OFFICE  
ADELAIDE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

JULY 5

I hereby certify that this is a true copy of an Entry in a Register kept in this office in the State of South Australia. Given under my hand and seal

*John H. Taylor*  
Principal Registrar.



When Born	Name, M. or F.	Sex	Name and Residence of Father	Name and Maiden Residence of Mother	Rank or Profession of Father	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant	When Registered	Signature of Assistant Registrar	Name of School after Registration of Birth
1884 May 24 <sup>th</sup> at Adelaide	Albert	Male	Alfred Withersidge	Polly Withersidge formerly Withersidge	Laborer	Anne Withersidge Aunt Adelaide	July 5 <sup>th</sup>	H. Taylor	

Entered at the District Registry Office, this

5<sup>th</sup>

day of July

1884


*John H. Taylor*  
Deputy Registrar.

BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES REGISTRATION OFFICE  
ADELAIDE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

APR 15 1893

I hereby certify that this is a true copy of an Entry in a Register kept in this office in the State of South Australia. Given under my hand and seal

*John H. Taylor*  
Principal Registrar.



I think we should try to arrange the facts we now have, and I will add some information which appears to be linked.

Although we have no records to show where Richard Witheridge and his wife Mary Ann Hatherly died, I think it safe to assume that they did not return to England to die as we previously thought, so we must look in the Australian record for their deaths, and correct the record on our previous family tree that Mary Ann Hatherly died in Tavistock in 1891.

Marion, the infant on board The Prince of Wales, is noted in the St. Catherine' House indexes as being born in the September quarter of 1865, so on arrival in Adelaide she would be one year old.

An additional piece of information is that the first party who travelled to Australia in 1866 were classed as Assisted Migrants, Reference Number 8957. In this list Richard was classed as a labourer, and it also states that he paid £1.0.0 to "Wilcox" to be employed. The records do not show how Alfred and Anne were classed, but it is assumed that as they had relatives to stay with, they did not need to pay to guarantee employment.

Now please study the Marriage Certificate of 18th October, 1879.

Note Alfred's name - he is using "Percy" as a surname. Now look at Polly's age. She was born in 1863, which makes her 16 years. Next, observe the name of Alfred's father- "John Percy". This should have been "John Phillips Witheridge". "Percy" was the maiden name of John's mother. Notice the names of the witnesses - two Fosters. Were they related? Why didn't Mary Ann Witheridge or Alfred's sister Anne act as witnesses?

All these false statements and missing witnesses! Could there have been some kind of cover up? After all the bride and groom were uncle and niece, and there may have been a law prohibiting the marriage of an uncle and niece (there was such a law in England). The bride was only sixteen who knows what happened?

Birth Certificate of George Witheridge (not Percy)- 9th December, 1879.:- Here we have a change in residence to Brighton, and the father's name is not stated. Now look at the birth certificate of John Witheridge, born 1903 - under the section "Previous Issue" we have George, 19 years. That would make George's year of birth 1884 - five years out!



The other certificates are shown purely as proof of the dates which are different from the trees shown in the magazines Volume 5 No. 2, Summer 1991, and Volume 4 No. 1, Summer 1990, and as proof of the extra family members who have been found recently.

I should like to draw the attention of our readers to the person who is responsible for gathering this new information from the Australian archives. She is Mrs. Margery "Flo" Streatfield. She and I had been working on an up-to-date tree of the descendants of the Tavistock family, but we had to set it aside when it was discovered that the basis of this tree would be incorrect from the outset. We hope that we have now put the Tavistock-Australian house in order, and look forward to introducing you to the contemporary Australian descendants of Polly and Alfred Witheridge.

One important item of information was found and sent to me by Mrs. Velma Metcalfe in New Zealand. This was the discovery of the death of Emma Edith Witheridge, aged 10 months, daughter of Alfred and Polly, at Coburg, in the territory of Victoria, 1892.

Velma also discovered two more Witheridge names which were unknown to us, and have a connection with New Zealand and America. We are trying to discover more about these and hope to comment on them later.

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#### FOUND

Information supplied by Velma Metcalfe, New Zealand

We reproduce the marriage certificate of George Witheridge who married at Invercargill, New Zealand, in 1891. The Society has a birth certificate for George who was born in Newington, London, in 1858. We did not know that he emigrated to New Zealand.

The death certificate is for a John Witheridge, aged 72, who died in New Zealand in 1916. The certificate states that he came from the United States of America. Does anyone know him?

1887/

## Marriages in the District of

11/2722  
Invercargill.

No.	When and Where Married.	Names and Surnames of the Parties.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Condition of Parties (1) Single (2) Widower or Divorced (3) Widow or Divorced (4) Former Wife or Husband.	Birthplace.	Residence 1. Present 2. Usual.	Parents.	
								Father's Name and Surname (1) and his Rank or Profession (2).	Mother's Name (1) Maiden Surname.
225	1887/1. July 21 <sup>st</sup> In the house of the Rev. Joseph Sharp Forth Street Invercargill	George Witheridge  Sarah Grace Turner	32  23	Painter  —	1. Bachelor  2. —	London England  Auckland N.Z.	1. Invercargill  2. Invercargill	1. William Witheridge  2. Jones	1. Hannah Witheridge  2. Lee
					1. Spinster  2. —		1. Invercargill  2. Invercargill	1. William Turner  2. Miner	1. Sarah  2. Shepher.

MARRIED, after the delivery to me of the Certificate required by "The Marriage Act, 1880," by

Joseph Sharp

Officiating Minister (ex-lege)

This Marriage was solemnised between us,

George Witheridge  
Sarah Grace Turner

In the presence of us,

Louis Thomas Butler South Invercargill, Carter.  
Eliza Butler, Wife of above.

I CERTIFY that the above is a true copy of the entry in the Register-book of Marriages kept by me, Frederick Gibbons, South Invercargill, Late &c.

Joseph Sharp  
Officiating Minister (ex-Register).

FOR INFO

REGISTER

1887/1

30

PAGE 11034089

DEATHS - 1912 AND ONWARDS

No.	1 When died 2 Where died	1 Name 2 Occupation 3 Usual Place of Residence	1 Sex 2 Age	1 Causes of Death & Intervals between Onset and Death 2 Medical Attendant 3 When last saw Deceased	1 Name of Father 2 Name of Mother 3 Maiden Surname of Mother 4 Occupation of Father	1 When buried 2 Where buried	Name and Religion of Minister or Name of Witness	1 Where born 2 How long in NZ	1 Where married 2 At what Age 3 To whom married 4 Age of Widow if Living	If issue Living, state Ages each Sex	*Maori Blood and Tribe of (a) Father (b) Mother	Informant	Registrar
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\* Note: Degree of Maori Blood and Tribe of Parents Entered on Death Registrations after 1961

01sk 00428/Doc 02718/1992

670	1. 1916 Sept/Oct 2. 13. Stafford Street Dunedin	1. John McKechnie 2. Leaman	1. M. 2. 42 years	1. Enlargement of prostate. Some pain 2. Exhaustion after operation 3. L.G. Allen 4. 13 Sept 1916		1. } 2. } 3. } 4. }	1. } 2. } 3. } 4. }	1. 1916 Splunk Spence 14. Gimling Anderson & Presby Bay.	1. 1916 6 J. St. U.S. American	1. 2-30 years 42	1. 42-44 years 2. 3. 4.		
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## THE DAY WAR BROKE OUT

By Joyce Browne

I have heard that when some shattering piece of news breaks everyone can remember for ever after what they were doing at the time.

My unforgettable moment was the 3rd September, 1939. It was a day warm and sunny, and I can still see the blue sky, although I can't remember a thing about the weather of the rest of that summer and autumn. It was Sunday, and I had to go to work. That in itself was unusual as no one, except some workers in public service and hospital staff, worked on a Sunday, but this Sunday was different. In spite of the warm weather there was a cold chill of foreboding in the air as Britain prepared itself for War.

We had had a year, since Prime Minister Chamberlain returned from Munich, to get used to the idea that Hitler was not going to desist from his activities, and that we would need to defend ourselves.

Television comedy shows like 'Dad's Army' portray the civilian population as totally and comically disorganised. It was not. Since Munich the Air Raid Precautions Service (ARP) had been training. In addition to the Police, Fire and Ambulance Services there was a corps of Air Raid Wardens, full and part-time, who reported the location and severity of bomb incidents to a Central Control. There were light and heavy rescue squads who went to incidents with rescue gear and lifting equipment. There were mobile First Aid teams operating from converted buses who treated casualties on the spot, and decided whether they could be sent to Casualty Clearing Stations whose function it was to treat the less seriously wounded and keep them out of hospital if possible.

Every business and factory had its own team of fire fighters, first aiders and anti-gas personnel (poison gas was the thing which was feared most).

My father, Arthur Harry Witheridge, worked for the Skefko Ball Bearing Company, and was part of their rescue team. On this Sunday, all these people were on alert, but not called for action as yet.

Because I worked at a Clinic for women and children which was a First Aid Post at night, and transformed itself into a First Aid Post at the sound of the air raid siren by day, I was automatically drafted into the Casualty Service, although officially too young.

I was already tired at eight o'clock on this morning as I cycled the two miles from home to the Clinic. Father was tired as he went off to the factory, not to do his normal work, but to help in erecting barriers against blast and shrapnel splinters. He was exhausted from digging a large hole in the garden to take our Government issue 'Anderson' air raid shelter.

A state of emergency had existed for several days prior to the declaration of War, and our town, Luton, was designated as a reception area for evacuees whom the Government had decided must leave the capital, London. Luton organised itself to receive thousands of mothers with babies, and children over five on their own, and accommodate them in private homes. On the three days prior to Sunday evacuee trains were met at the railway station by a fleet of buses, and the women and children brought to the Clinic and the school next door for documentation, medical examination, and allocation to their new homes.

The Clinic staff worked from early morning until evening without pause. Considering the enormity of the undertaking it ran smoothly, but the physical effort and the emotional impact of seeing the queues of children and little tots, with labels round their necks, their gas masks in cardboard boxes, and pathetic little attache cases in their hands had left me drained, and with a sense of unreality.

As I approached the Clinic, which was in the centre of town, opposite a Hospital and Infirmary, I realised that although normal traffic had almost stopped the street was a scene of intense activity. On the previous day the Ministry of Defence had called for volunteers to work to protect public buildings, and lorries dumped loads of sand and empty sand bags in the gutters. Now, in the warm sunshine hundreds of men and boys, equipped with their own shovels, were toiling to fill the sand bags and erect protective walls in front of strategic buildings.

They built a corridor of sand bags about ten feet high in front of the entrance to the Clinic, As the months went by this barrier became more of a danger than a protection as wasps found it an ideal nesting place, and if you could get in to work without being stung, you were lucky!

On this Sunday, no more evacuees were expected, but the staff went in to work to clear up and prepare for the next day, whatever that might bring. I was put to help protect the windows by criss-crossing them with sticky tape. Teetering on the top of a pair of steps, I had a good view

of the street and the backs of the straining workers. I could hear the scrape of the shovels, the jokes and grim badinage, and see the gratitude when women appeared from nowhere with jugs of tea. (Tea and sugar were not yet rationed).

The Sister-in-Charge at the Clinic, a trim figure, immaculate in her 'working' uniform of white starched cap and apron, navy blue linen dress with sleeves rolled up and the sleeve ends concealed under elasticated cuffs (her 'office' uniform was a navy blue crêpe-de-chine dress with no apron and sleeves rolled down), soon decided that we girls were having too much fun, getting the occasional wolf whistle from outside as we perched on the steps, and giggling as we wrestled with the sticky tape, which had a mind of its own. She said this was a job for the men, and we could go home.

I had not seen my boy friend for some days. He was not in his Office opposite the Clinic, nor among the volunteers in the street. For days I had not been able to keep any of our usual rendezvous, we had no telephone at home, and I couldn't think of a way to communicate. Greatly daring, I decided to go to his home, about ten minutes ride away, and enquire. I felt very apprehensive because at that time if a girl appeared at a boy friend's home uninvited she would be considered no lady, but a forward hussy. But this time was exceptional.

The door was opened by his mother. I knew that her Christian names were 'Thurza Minerva' but of course I addressed her formally. "You must be Joyce" she said, "Call me Min." "Clem isn't here, but you had better come in because Neville Chamberlain is about to speak on the wireless."

She made tea, and in her comfortable living room we listened to the Prime Minister speaking to the nation. She chain smoked as we sat in silence. I noticed that her hand shook as she lit her cigarettes and I recollected that she had lost relatives in the first World War - and wasn't her only son almost of age for military service? Even I was not naive enough to imagine that this war would be over in six months but neither of us realised that our lives would be changed for six long years, perhaps for ever.

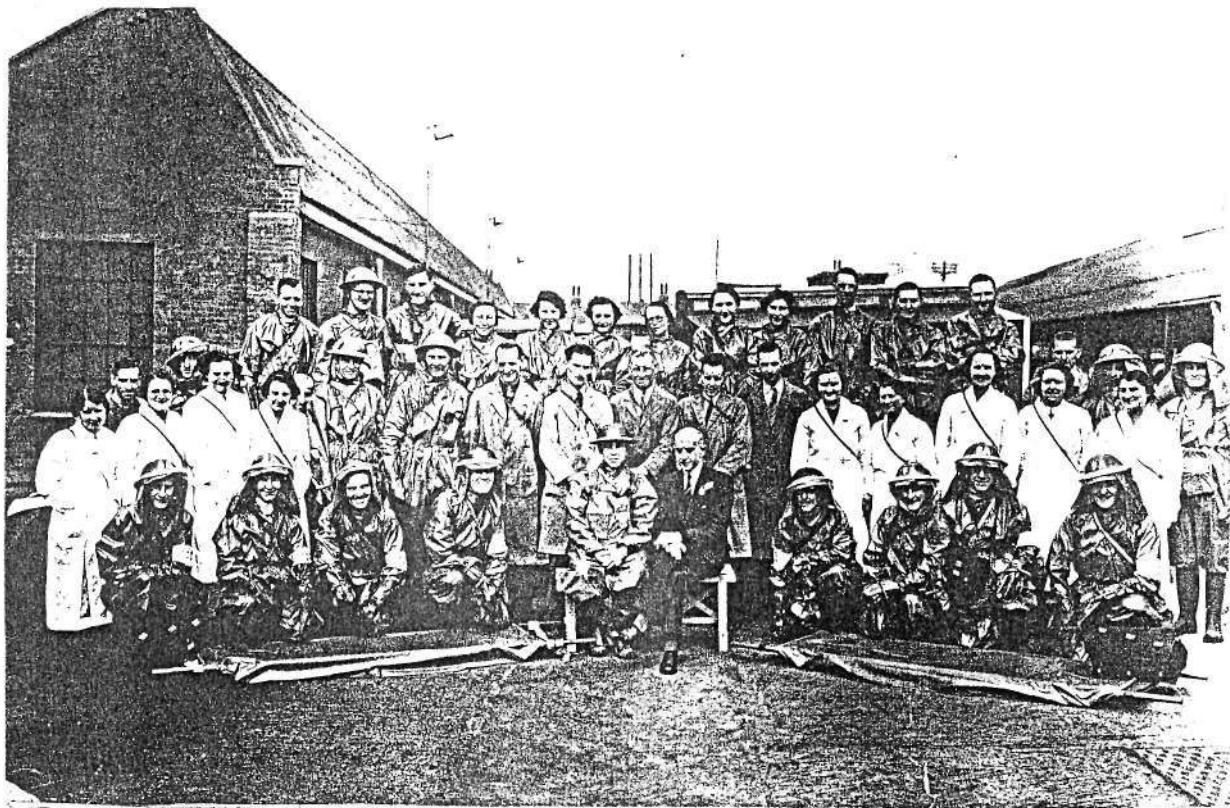
Min invited me to tea the next Sunday, provided that we were still in one piece. We had been led to believe that bombs would scream through the air the moment that war was declared. (There was an alert in London, but nothing happened.) No, Min didn't become my mother-in-law, but she did become my friend.

I left messages about my likely future whereabouts and then went home, cycling past the toilers and rising sand bag walls. Dad was home and was already digging. He and a neighbour had dug one hole in the garden the previous year, but had filled it in when they thought that war had been averted.

Selfishly, I didn't think to ask what my Mother had been doing on that momentous morning, and the rest of my own day is a complete blank.

The Clinic is a warehouse now. The houses where the women made tea have long since disappeared under a ring road, and the Hospital itself is about to be demolished, but any 3rd September I can still see the lines of sweating men, feel the gritty mess of sand under my feet, and hear the peculiar voice of Neville Chamberlain telling us that we were at war with Germany.





Arthur Harry Witheridge in his anti-gas rescue gear,  
(front row, kneeling, fourth from left)



## NEW MEMBERS

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- 107 Mrs. Margery Florence Streatfield,  
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