



Volume 8

Number 1

Spring 1994

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E D I T O R I A L

As the New Year begins, and I write the first editorial of 1994, it is inevitable that the mind turns back to the Old Year, and I think about the progress of the Society. For some individual members, 1993 was far from being a good year, but for the Society as a whole I think we made progress. This was manifested by our sound financial footing, by new members coming forward, and by the interest shown by our members overseas, who continued their research, and followed this up by sending us information and articles for the magazine.

No progress can be maintained without feed back, and this we need to assess whether we are on the right track to please our readers. So please send us your comments, letters, 'phone calls, and any information you may have.

After four years of drought, we have now had incessant rain which has caused severe flooding in several parts of the country, but as far as I know, none of our members has been affected by the floods. I hope that none of our Australian members has been affected by the fires which have raged in New South Wales. Our television reports that bitter cold has paralysed parts of the United States and Canada, and again we hope that our members have escaped harm.

This is the last magazine before Witheridge Day, which once again will be held at Alderton, Gloucestershire. The date is MONDAY, 2nd MAY, 1994 - make it a Red Letter Day and join us! I look forward to meeting friends, old and new!



FAMILY NEWS

I am sad to report that the health of Jean Witheridge, wife of our publisher and past President, Philip, has deteriorated. Jean has suffered from multiple sclerosis for many years, but recently had a set-back which resulted in her being admitted to hospital in Cheltenham. At the time of writing Jean is said to be gravely ill, but holding her own. Our thoughts and prayers are with her and Philip.

We have had a number of friends who have suffered from 'shingles' in 1993. The illness seems to have been

widespread in the UK, and among the sufferers were our members Mrs. Barbara Popplestone, and Mr. Bob Thomas. Barbara had a particularly nasty bout, and we do hope that she has recovered and can look forward to better health in 1994. Bob says that he has made good progress.

More cheerful news is of a wedding - Delia Witheridge, daughter of David and June Witheridge of Plympton, Devon, was married to Mr. Don Fairburn on the 15th October, 1993. The ceremony was at St. Mary's Church, Plympton, and afterwards family and friends went back to the home of David and June for a buffet meal. June tells me that everyone had a really lovely day.

An interesting point made by June is that some incorrect information appeared on the marriage certificate which was not noticed until some weeks after the wedding. The name of the bride's father was entered as 'David Mumford' instead of 'David Mumford Witheridge'. Could this kind of mistake be responsible for some of our research difficulties in the past? Researchers beware!

GOOD NEWS ABOUT THE MEMBERSHIP FEE!

Once again, despite higher postal charges and other increased costs, we have held the subscription fee for 1994 at the same rates! These are:-

Family membership	£10.0
Individual membership	7.0
Economy membership (Students, Pensioners and Unemployed)	5.0
Overseas Membership	12.0

Overseas members may pay for three years in advance, if this is more convenient to them. The Membership Secretary, John Witheridge, cannot be responsible for 1994 subscriptions, which are now due, unless they are paid directly to him - address inside front cover.

NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE WITHERIDGE
SOCIETY

The Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held on Monday, 2nd May, 1994, in the Village Hall, Alderton, Gloucestershire, at 2. 0 p.m.

The Agenda is as follows:-

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the sixth Annual General Meeting held on the 3rd May, 1993.
3. Matters arising from the Minutes
4. Chairman's Report
5. Secretary's Report
6. Membership Secretary's Report
7. Treasurer's Report
8. Research Co-ordinator's Report
9. Election of Officers
10. Any other business

The Annual General Meeting is incorporated in our Witheridge Day reunion, and if you are not able to attend, but would like to nominate a person to hold office in the Society, please complete the form attached to the invitation which accompanies this magazine. Please return the form to me, the undersigned, or to Mrs. Mayda Witheridge, Secretary - addresses inside front cover.

It is necessary to obtain the consent of any person so nominated.

If there is any matter which you would like to be considered under 'Any other business', it would be helpful if you would notify me, or our Secretary, Mrs. Mayda Witheridge.



COUNCIL OF FAMILY SOCIETIES, FOUNDED 1993

Report by John Witheridge

You will remember that, as reported in the Minutes, I asked permission at the Annual General Meeting for the Witheridge Society to join with a group of Societies of the UK.

The object of the exercise was to combine our research capabilities, and to keep a look out for each other's family names in any of the research fields in which we were working.

We have taken this one step further by forming an organisation named "The Council of Family Societies", which will be working in research, and will hope to encourage new Societies to be formed from the wealth of one name groups throughout the world. In fact, from any area which is researching a name of British origin. We will be working in conjunction with the Federation of Family History Societies and with the Guild of One Name Studies. It is hoped that we will be able to broaden the scope of research throughout the English speaking world. This will be manifest in our magazine, "The Witheridge Times", over the coming years. We have already found connections between the member Societies, which before had been acknowledged as just another item of data, now this same point is regarded as joint history.

We, the Witheridge Society, were honoured when we were asked to be one of the founding members of the new Society. We were also honoured again when I was asked to become Chairman for the initial period until our first elected council members take up their posts. This will be some time in the next six months.

As members of the Witheridge Society you may not realise that the Witheridge Society's name is becoming one to be recognised in the world of genealogy and family history. This is due to your support and endeavour in the world of family history.

So it is really you who have been honoured in this way, and I hope that it will continue in this vein for many years. To the best of my ability I will do all I can to represent you.

Congratulations to you all, and keep up your good work.



The
COUNCIL of FAMILY SOCIETIES
(founded 1993)

From: The Secretary
'Roze', 13 Downesway
Alderley Edge, Cheshire
SK9 7XB
Tel: 0625-584588

Following the support given at a meeting of representatives of One-Name Societies held in Birmingham on the 11th September 1993, at a further meeting held in Birmingham on Saturday 20 November 1993, it was proposed by Mr John Witheridge of the Witheridge Society and seconded by Mr Ernest Hamley of the Hamley, Hambly & Hamlyn Family History Society that an organisation be set up to be called The Council of Family Societies with the aim of providing a forum for Family, Clan and One-Name Societies for the promotion and encouragement of the study of the names of families of British origin.

This proposal was carried unanimously.

It was further resolved to appoint a steering committee to prepare a constitution for presentation to members early in 1994.

The temporary officers appointed were:

Chairman	John Witheridge (Witheridge Society)
Vice-Chairman	Ernest Hamley (Hamley, Hambly & Hamlyn FHS) .
Secretary	Douglas Beresford (Beresford FHS)
Treasurer & Editor	Iain Swinnerton (Swinnerton Society)

The temporary officers above agreed to make an initial donation of £5 each to cover the initial costs.

It was agreed that the Secretary should now write to those societies who had expressed support for the formation of the Council but had been unable to attend the meeting, inviting them to join the Council.

PHILEMONS GALORE!

By John Witheridge

May I ask you a question? How many members of the Witheridge family, past and present, do you know about who bear the name 'Philemon'?

One Two. . . . Three. . . .? No! - many, many more!

First, the name 'Philemon': The Oxford Dictionary of English Names give this description - Philemon (M=Masculine) pronounced 'Filemon' (as in 'Fine') - of Greek origin, meaning 'kiss'. A very common name in Greece. The Epistle from St. Paul to Philemon led to the name's usage as a Christian name in the 17th Century.

Come this way and I will introduce you to them all.

The first we meet is Philemon born in 1843 to Thomas and Jane Witheridge, nee Thomas. This poor young chap had but a very short life for he died the following year, barely 14 months old. He has the honour of being our first Philemon Witheridge. I often wonder how the name came into the Witheridge family? Perhaps it was a family name of the Thomas family. Perhaps the father of Jane Thomas from Ilfracombe bore the name? In time, we shall find out.

The second Philemon was born in Williton, Somerset, in 1845. At times he is referred to as Philemon Thomas, but it is the same person. This man in later life, together with his wife Mary Carvath, probably made the biggest single contribution to the population within the Witheridge family. In all, we have counted 15 children born in or around the territories of Victoria and New South Wales, Australia, but this is not all. I have just found that Philemon and Mary had one child in Helston, Cornwall, before they emigrated.

See what you think of the death certificate of Philemon, listing all the issue from his marriage with Mary Carvarth. Note also that the next document, (the birth certificate of their first born son, Thomas, in Cornwall, has the mother's name spelt 'Carveth'. It should also be noted that Thomas, born 2nd November, 1872, probably was either still born or died soon after birth, for we can see in our St. Catherine's House Index for Witheridge deaths that a Thomas died in the December quarter, 1872, in the Helson registration area, Ref. No. 5c 136. I am at this moment in correspondence with a lady from Cornwall, who is attempting to trace Mary Carvarth/Carveth's ancestors for us. I personally await this with bated breath.

Note, on Thomas's birth certificate, that Philemon is named as 'Philip Witheridge'. In fact, the name of 'Thomas', above, was crossed out. Is this significant, I wonder, or just a mistake?

Now look at the marriage certificate of Philemon and Mary Carvarth. Philemon and Mary both sign the certificate. I now refer you back to the birth certificate, where Philemon makes his mark as informant of the birth. I wonder what is the explanation for this? Why sign the marriage certificate and then make his mark on the birth certificate of his first born child - again in the name of Philip Witheridge. (Joyce wondered if he did not like his name and adopted 'Philip' in preference) It is small wonder that mistakes can and do happen in research. Please also note that Philemon was at this point a seaman in the merchant service, not yet a fisherman. Until now this is what we have always understood his trade to be.

Mrs. Dorothy Witheridge, from Eastwood, New South Wales, has sent to me a photograph of Philemon and Mary's gravestone at Berry. This in itself has filled in a gap in the family tree of this family. Dorothy also sent me the death certificate we have referred to. I had been saving it for one of those long promised reports I still have to finish, but this opportunity presented itself and could not be missed. To add further interest to this section of Philemon and Mary's life is a photograph that I have had in my possession for nearly two years. It was taken in the year 1927 at the home of the sweet young lady shown, Phyllis Witheridge, now Mrs. Phyllis Cocking, our member in Collaroy, New South Wales, and the fine old gentleman is Philemon Thomas Witheridge.

The next bearer of the name was Philemon Thomas born in the December quarter of 1884 at Falmouth. Alas, this Philemon also died in the December quarter of 1884 (shown in our St. Catherine's House indexes for deaths 5c 121.) At this time I have no proof of his parentage, but I suspect that he was the son of John Witheridge who married in Falmouth in the December quarter of the year 1883 (5c 291). The two dates seem to tie in with each other, but of course this is speculation. Let me add some facts which have come to light in the past two weeks:- both Joyce and I have been trying to find families for several strays from the Helston, Cornwall, area, and we had one name which for some years we have had a difference of opinion about, so we decided to buy a certificate to try and settle it. We bought the birth certificate for Hilda Thomas Witheridge, born on the 9th January, 1886, but this has only added to our exasperation

as we could not even place the parents. This did not do my ego any good, for I had considered myself something of an authority on the Combe Martin and Berrynarbor families, but I am the first to concede that genealogy makes a fool out of every so called expert. Now I have to present to you a possibility that I will do my best to prove or disprove.

The parents of Hilda Thomas Witheridge were a John Witheridge and his wife Mary Ann, nee Thomas, so if my theory is correct, Hilda was sister to Philemon Thomas, born 1884. Hilda was born in 1886, in the district of Helston at Wendron in Cornwall. I submit this certificate for you to read. Her father John was a grocer by trade, which in itself is a rather unusual trade for a Witheridge, especially living within the families of the fishing community. Now could John be an older member of the family who left the hard life of a fisherman to work ashore? I will leave this point for a while.

Hilda, you will find, died unmarried in the year 1966, at the age of 79, confirming that she was the child born in 1886 (7a 295), but not in Helston or Falmouth where Philemon T. was born and died, but in Truro. "But surely", I can hear you saying, "none of this ties up?" Let us consider other facts - in 1899, in Falmouth, a Mary Ann Witheridge died at the age of 67 years, meaning that she would be born circa 1832. This would make her rather old to be the mother of Hilda, but I would like to suggest to you that this Mary Ann Witheridge was the wife of John Witheridge, formerly Mary Ann Thomas, and that the age given as age at death is possibly not correct.

We have no record for John on the death registers for Cornwall. All the recorded Johns are accounted for, but this is not to say that he could not have died in another county, but on looking through the indexes I do not see another John who could fit in to this family. There are alternatives:- death abroad whilst on duty with the Services, emigration to another country. The date of his birth could be from approximately 1832, the same year as his wife's birth, to about 20 years before the earliest recorded child was born (1866). What we will have to ask ourselves is, "Who does this fit?" One suggestion where we might find some possible answers - John Witheridge who died in Dunedin, New Zealand? I would be happy to hear your thoughts on this problem.

Next comes a character whom I have spent many an exciting hour researching - the father of our member Mrs. Phyllis Cocking, and husband to our very first honorary member,

Ellen, whom we now sadly miss. He is that very honourable man, Philemon Thomas, born in the Helston area in 1890 and who later emigrated to Australia. We have spent a great deal of time researching this very resilient man, but I think that we can spare a paragraph here. Look at the photograph of Philemon Thomas at the ruins of the old Witheridge homestead at Greenwell Point in 1930. This was taken by a companion of Philemon's when they were working as travelling salesmen. They would travel the south east areas of Australia, selling what they could, to keep money coming in for their families to live on.

The time was during the great depression, when work was nowhere to be found. Philemon was a truly dedicated husband and father, whose health was not always good, but a man who put his family first. The homestead at Greenwell Point was the home of his uncle Philemon and Aunt Mary Carvarth, as mentioned above.

Now this is where most of you will assume that there are no more members of our family who still bear that honourable name, but with the help of my good friend and fellow researcher from Australia, Mrs. Dorothy Witheridge, I would like to introduce you to a few more!

Philemon Thomas, born 1845, had, as I have said before, 15 children in Australia. His sixth child and first son born in Australia was also named Philemon. He was uncle to Michael Alan Witheridge, (Dorothy's late husband). and as far as we have been able to ascertain, he had five children, one son and four daughters. We will in time find out more about this section of the Australian Witheridge family. We are not sure how many descendants he has, but I'm sure the number we know will grow. After all, they are members of our Combe Martin and Berrynarbor family who pop up in great numbers throughout the length and breadth of the world - this family who continually raises its head to be counted at regular intervals as perpetuating the male population of the Witheridge families.

May I introduce our last Philemon - well I do expect more, but at the moment Philemon Charles (known as 'Toby' to his friends and family) is the last in the long line of Witheridge men to carry that traditional name. Toby, I think, like Philemon/Philip before him does not really like the name Philemon. He prefers his adopted name 'Toby'.

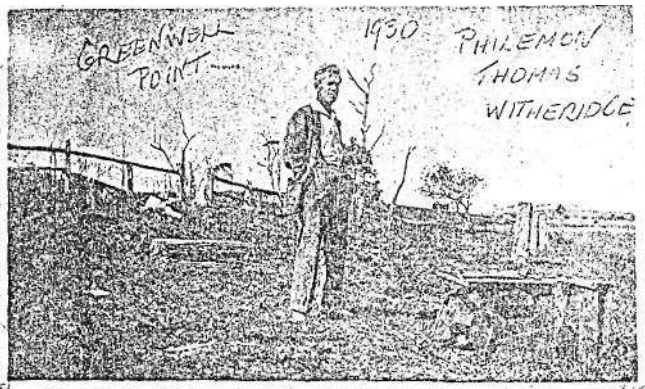
Philemon Charles is the son of William, born in 1890 in New South Wales, and Rosie Witheridge, and he lives in Terara in

New South Wales. He has five brothers and sisters, and two sons carrying the name of Witheridge into the future. Perhaps one of the later generations of the New South Wales Witheridges has or will continue the tradition and name a child 'Philemon Witheridge'.

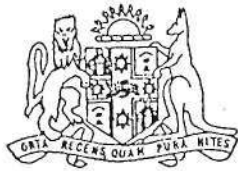
(Footnote to this article - there are probably just as many ladies born to this great family with the name 'Phyllis'. With your permission, I might be allowed to introduce them to you some time in the future).



PHILEMON BORN 1846



PHILEMON THOMAS AT WITHERIDGE HOMESTEAD



DEATH REGISTERED IN NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA.

CERTIFIED COPY FURNISHED UNDER PART V OF THE REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES ACT, 1973.

No.	Date and place of death	Name and occupation	Sex and age	Cause of death Duration of last illness; medical attendant; when he last saw deceased	Name and occupation of father Name and maiden surname of mother	Informant	Particulars of registration	When and where buried; name of undertaker	Name and religion of Minister and names of witnesses of burial	Where born and how long in the Australasian Colonies or States	Place of marriage, age, and to whom	Children of marriage
4254	18 August 1957 Victoria Road Municipality Korumburra	Philemon Thomas Witheridge Fisherman	Male 93 years	Influenza 165 Sailing 12 1/2 days A J Hope Registered 17 August 1957	(1) Philemon Witheridge (2) Coast Guard (3) Jane Thomas	R. Newman Grand Daughter Victoria Road Korumburra	(1) Scott Hapley (2) 31 August 1957 (3) WITHERIDGE	(1) 30 August 1957 Methodist Cemetery Herrys Arthur Shear Walters (2) J. Walters and son R. Fisher	(1) H. Arthur Methodist Methodist	England 60 years about 3 years in Cornwall	(1) England (27) years (3) Mary Carlett	Jane Charles Mary Philip Robert Ann Joseph William Evelyn Elizabeth Linda Garry Lester

REGISTRATION DISTRICT Helston

1872 BIRTH in the Sub-district of Wendron in the County of Cornwall

Columns	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No.	When and where born	Name, if any	Sex	Name and surname of father	Name, surname and maiden surname of mother	Occupation of father	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar	Name entered after registration
	Second November 1872 Perthshire Sutherland	Thomas	Boy	Thomas Philip Witheridge	Mary Jane Witheridge formerly Cavill	Seaman in Merchant Service	X The Mark of Philip Witheridge Sutherland Perthshire Sutherland	1872		Thomas Philip Witheridge

CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF MARRIAGE

GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE

Application Number 5 009228



Dec. 1871
Helen 5c 869

1874 Marriage solemnized at North Ferrisburgh in the Parish of North Ferrisburgh in the County of Orleans

No.	When Married	Name and Surname	Age	Condition	Rank or Profession	Residence at the time of Marriage	Father's Name and Surname	Rank or Profession of Father
96	February 9	William Wilbur	24	Single	Farmer	North Ferrisburgh	Timothy Wilbur	Farmer
		Mary Powell	23	Single	Wife	North Ferrisburgh	John Powell	Farmer

Married in the Parish of North Ferrisburgh according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by Wm. H. H. H. H. or after Wm. H. H. H. by me,

This Marriage was solemnized before us, William Wilbur in the presence of us, John Wilbur Mary Powell John Powell

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a register of Marriages in the Registration District of Helsbo day of October 19 93
Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, under the seal of the said Office, the 11th

MX 694261

This certificate is issued in pursuance of section 65 of the Marriage Act 1919. Sub-section 3 of that section provides that any certified copy of an entry purporting to be sealed or stamped with the seal of the General Register Office shall be received as evidence in the said Office shall be of any force or effect unless it is sealed or stamped as aforesaid.

CAUTION—It is an offence to falsify a certificate or to make or knowingly use a false certificate or a copy of a false certificate intending it to be accepted as genuine to the prejudice of any person, or to process a certificate knowing it to be false without lawful authority.

Form A513MAX

DL 842548 FORM 6093 MAR 24 1920

WARNING: THIS CERTIFICATE IS NOT EVIDENCE OF THE IDENTITY OF THE PERSON PRESENTING IT.



Maria Helena



REGISTERED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF BIRTH

60928

REGISTRATION DISTRICT Helston in the County of Cornwall

<u>Birth</u>	<u>1888</u>	<u>January</u>	<u>30th</u>	<u>Helston</u>	<u>Helston</u>	<u>Helston</u>	<u>Helston</u>	<u>Helston</u>	<u>Helston</u>
<u>Parents</u>	<u>John</u>	<u>Elizabeth</u>	<u>John</u>	<u>Elizabeth</u>	<u>John</u>	<u>Elizabeth</u>	<u>John</u>	<u>Elizabeth</u>	<u>John</u>
<u>Signature</u>	<u>John</u>	<u>Elizabeth</u>	<u>John</u>	<u>Elizabeth</u>	<u>John</u>	<u>Elizabeth</u>	<u>John</u>	<u>Elizabeth</u>	<u>John</u>
<u>Signature</u>	<u>John</u>	<u>Elizabeth</u>	<u>John</u>	<u>Elizabeth</u>	<u>John</u>	<u>Elizabeth</u>	<u>John</u>	<u>Elizabeth</u>	<u>John</u>

October 1933

BXBZ 491683

See note overleaf

CAUTION: It is an offence to falsify a certificate or to make or knowingly use a false certificate or a copy of a false certificate intending it to be accepted as genuine to the prejudice of any person or to pass a certificate knowing it to be false without lawful authority. PENALTY: Imprisonment or a fine. WARNING: THIS CERTIFICATE IS NOT EVIDENCE OF THE IDENTITY OF THE PERSON PRESENTING IT.



LOST OR FOUND?

From John Witheridge

WILLIAM WITHERIDGE. born where and when I do not know.

I do know that he died, as a result of war injuries, at Chatham Military Hospital, and was buried on the 3rd February, 1790, at St. Mary's Parish Church. He was a soldier of the 73rd Foot Regiment, commonly known as the Frazers' Highlanders.

Does anyone know where he came from? His age could have been anywhere between sixty and forty years, but I feel that had he been of any great age he would have held some rank, and this would have been shown on the burial records.

Also Kathy Witheridge, our North American Representative, would like your assistance. Kathy is trying to find the origins of a JOHN WITHERIDGE who fought his way through the Boer War, the Indian uprising in the Khyber Pass, and then the First World War. He retired, lived, married and finally died in Canada. He attained the rank of Sergeant Major.

Notes from his gravestone give his birth date as 9th November, 1874, but his age at the time of death is given as 55, so as he died on Friday, 20th May, 1932, this would make his birth date as the year 1877.

Kathy states that this John is not from the Bradworthy family. Can you help?

FOUND? Not quite, but glimpsed in the distance!

From Joyce Browne

Throughout my researches into the Witheridge families I have been pleasantly surprised by the absence of black sheep (although we did discover a grey one who had to pay for a child he had fathered), but apart from that - no-one hanged, no-one imprisoned, no-one in debt. That has now changed, a flock of black sheep has come into view! Well, not exactly a flock, but a few.

The first one is Isaac Witheridge.. I have known about him for some time, and it was in the course of trying to discover his history that the names of other Witheridges who were convicted felons came to light. Does anyone know them, or will anyone claim them?

They are:- Isaac Witheridge, sentenced 1743
Joan Witheridge, sentenced 1734
John Witheridge, sentenced 1743
Emely Witheridge, sentenced 1847

Isaac, Joan and John Witheridge are listed in a book "Bonded Passengers to America 1664 - 1775". The Rev. David Witheridge of Minneapolis sent an extract of this book to Kathy Witheridge of Sarnia, Ontario, who forwarded it to me. It consists of alphabetical lists of names of convicts who were transported from Britain to America under "bonding" arrangements.

There are cryptic entries for the three Witheridges (not necessarily related or known to each other):

"Isaac Witheridge TB to VA from QS 1743"

"Joan Witheridge S August 1734"

"John Witheridge S March 1743"

"TB" I interpret as "Transported Back", "VA" as "Virginia", "S" as "Sentenced" and "QS" as "Quarter Sessions".

In 1743 America was still a British colony, and felons from Britain were transported there to work as labourers and servants to whoever would pay for them. After conviction felons could be 'contracted' to persons in Britain who guaranteed to take them from gaol within three months, and "effectually transport" them to America. The contractors, who paid a sum of money to the British Justices of the Peace, had to guarantee delivery of the convicts to Virginia, or other plantations in America, and to provide a certificate of the arrival of the felons, signed by the Governor or Chief Customs Officer of the place where they landed.

The only excuse for non-delivery was the death of a felon, or the sinking of the ship - a "casualty of the sea". The contractor also had to ensure that the convict, either by default or wilful design, did not re-appear in Great Britain or Ireland before the term of his sentence had expired.

Isaac Witheridge was convicted at the Exeter Assizes of January, 1742, of "several felonys and petty larcenys", and along with four other men, Thomas Stone, John Goddard, John Parsons and Thomas Warren, was sentenced to be transported to one of His Majesty's Colonies in America for seven years.

I have a copy of the documents signed by the Justices of the Peace and one George Buck, of Bideford, who paid the JPs the

sum of £150.0.0d., for the privilege of transporting the five men to Virginia. George Buck was to repay £30.0.0d., for each man he failed to deliver.

There is no mention in the documents of any minimum conditions of transportation, food supply, or any safeguard for the welfare of the prisoners. George Buck would have expected to recoup his outlay of £150.0.0d., plus the cost of the voyage, when he sold his felons to a Master in Virginia. It would be interesting to know what the price of a bonded servant was. It probably varied according to a man's skills, and it may be that a convict fetched more than a slave. On the other hand, a slave was bought for life, whereas a convict, at the end of his sentence, might be lost to a Master.

I have no knowledge of whether Isaac Witheridge ever returned to England, but we do know that he was in America in 1743. So far, I have failed to find his origins. The IGI gives a marriage of an Isaac to Ann Murch at Holy Trinity Church, Exeter, in 1741, but I can find no other information about this couple.

Of the Joan Witheridge sentenced to transportation in 1734, and the John Witheridge in 1743, I can find nothing, but perhaps someone out there can tell me?

Emely, or Emily, was thirty two years old when she was convicted at Exeter Assizes on the 23rd February, 1847. All we know for certain about her is that her reading and writing ability was "imperfect" and that she did not appear to have had any previous convictions. We don't know whether she was married or single.

She was charged with stealing, from three owners, a sheet and two petticoats, a pair of boots and four shirts, all from premises in Devonport. Was our Emily a shop-lifter? She paid very dearly for her petticoats - the sentence was transportation for seven years.

Transportation to Botany Bay ceased in 1840, so Emily would have been destined for Western Australia or Tasmania. As with the others, we don't know Emily's family, but perhaps this will spark off further research.

The documents available from the General Sessions of the Devonshire Assizes of 1847 make sad reading. The sentences were harsh - three months hard labour with two weeks solitary confinement for stealing a shirt and shift, three months hard labour with two weeks solitary confinement for

stealing one fowl. (This last sentence was on a girl named Mary Ann Beer - another name connected with Witheridges).

It is not clear what was the criteria for imprisonment, and what for transportation, nor why whipping was included in some punishments and not others, but at least our Emily was spared that. I wonder who she was and what happened to her?

At the moment my suspicions fall on Emily Blake who married Abel Witheridge in East Stonehouse in 1838. Abel was a stonemason, and the son of William Bowden Witheridge, millwright, of the Ermington line. East Stonehouse is a district which lies between Devonport (Stoke Damerel) and Plymouth. Abel and Emily subsequently lived in Devonport and that is where the offences were committed.

The Emily who was convicted was thirty two in 1847, which would make her date of birth circa 1815. The marriage certificate of Abel and Emily Blake states them to be "of full age". This would be compatible with a birth date of 1815, as Emily would then have been twenty three years old.

Abel and Emily had three children: William Moses Bowden, born 1838, Phillipa, born 1841, and George Henry born 1845. Is it significant that we can trace no more children after George Henry?

William Moses Bowden Witheridge went to Walsall and founded the Witheridge line there, Phillipa died in 1868, aged 27, and George Henry died in 1858, aged 13. The death certificate for George Henry names him as the child of Abel Witheridge, and it was Abel, "Present at the death", who gave information of the death to the Registrar. There is no mention of George Henry's mother. Was this because Emily was in Australia?

One other significant factor is that I can find no death record for Emily Blake Witheridge.

Only circumstantial evidence! I agree, and one argument against our convict being Emily Blake is that at the time there were several families of Ermington Witheridges in Devonport and Plymouth, including Emily's father-in-law, William, who were in comfortable circumstances. One would think that Abel and Emily would have received help if needed, and that Emily would not have been so desperate that she was forced to steal.

As the Police say "The file is still open", and we would welcome information from any one.

WINDS OF FORTUNE - HOW THEY BLOW HOT AND COLD

By John Witheridge

Date: Monday, the 30th June, 1800
Town: Chatham, Kent
Location: Junction of High Street and Heavysides Lane
Occasion: Great fire of Chatham, Medway Wharf

In this article, I would like to show you the changes of fortune for two men, living in Chatham. This first fire need not concern our readers too much, except that the records show that two men, amongst many others, showed their compassion for their fellow men and families. Collections were made far and wide to assist the homeless and those who suffered the worst fire in the history of the Hundreds of Chatham. From as far away as Dover, Devon, Hertfordshire and London collections were made. All levels of men and women contributed, many two or three times for the same collection. I have the records in front of me at this moment. Miss Twopenny contributed 10s.0d., and 5s.0d., in one day at Rochester. Mr. Gregory gave £1.1.0d. The Palmer family of Chatham, William senior and junior and John, gave 3s.0d. John Metcalfe gave 7s.0d., and many others gave also.

But there are two names I have left until last:-

William and Henry Witheridge each gave £1.1.0d.

I have come across these two names several times in the last few months. In fact they have led me a merry dance, and as yet I have not been able place them to any particular set of parents. They were, of course, members of the Rochester-London-Birmingham family, but who's sons were they?

For a further twenty years we lose them into the realms of obscure history, but history repeats itself in a very cruel way.

Date: 3rd March, 1820 Town: Chatham, Kent
Location: High Street Occasion: The dreadful fire of Chatham

This fire was by far the worst in the history of Chatham, including the great fire of 1800. It was first discovered in outbuildings at the rear of properties numbered 69 and 70 near the Town Quay. Within three hours 34 buildings were completely gutted with many more torn apart to form a fire break. Thirteen warehouses were destroyed at an estimated total loss of over £100,000.0.0d.

One lady with a babe in arms was crushed by falling masonry. Many were injured in major and minor incidents. Many had very bad burns from fighting the blaze. Thirteen undesirables were deported for looting the properties of the sufferers.

Records show that there were many subscribers to the fund for support of the homeless. Chatham Barracks supplied tents for accommodation, and many households took in the women and children until they were re-housed. The names of those who gave their hard earned cash to a fund for the victims were recorded.

Sorry - no Witheridge donations, except with courage - both William and Henry were injured whilst fighting the fire and removing furniture.

Many people were given allowances to rebuild or to replace their lost items. There are two listed records of pawnbrokers who pledged items to ease difficult money situations. There are records to show the amount of allowances paid and to whom, but there is one further record which interests us.

Description of properties affected by this fire: please look at Map 2, Dwelling 36, just outside the heavily damaged area, but still damaged. The record shows Dwelling 36 to be leased by William Witheridge, and occupied by the same, property slightly damaged.

Dwelling 7 - dwelling house and offices - owned by James Best, Esquire, leased by Henry Witheridge and occupied by Edward Davies, who was injured in the fire whilst carrying out his own belongings - building slightly damaged.

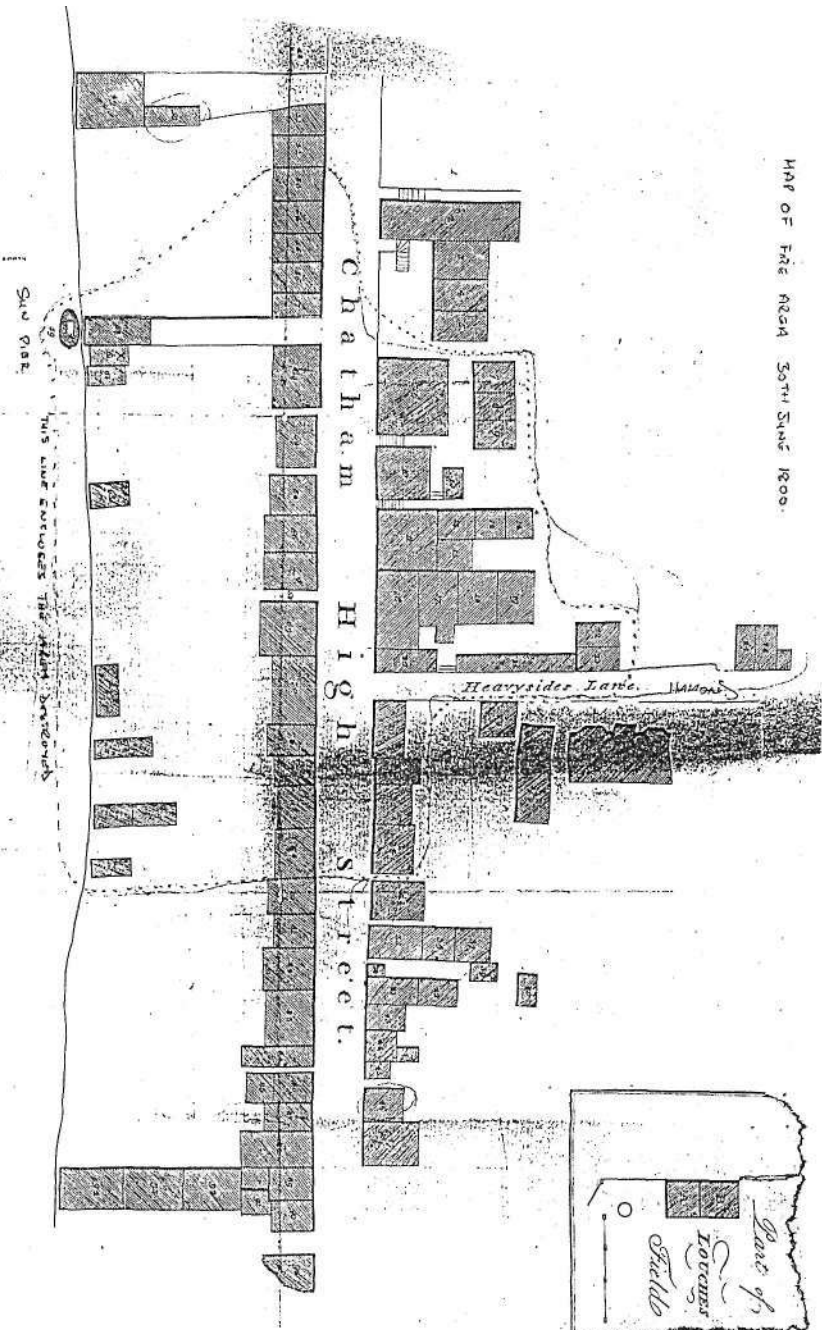
Dwelling 9 - Mansion owned and occupied by James Best, Esquire, slightly damaged.

Dwelling 44 - Tavern, the 'Sun Inn' owned by James Best, razed to the ground.

I feel proud of the members of the Witheridge family. In one fire they assisted with needed money, in the other they fought alongside their neighbours to halt the worst fire in Chatham's history. It pleases me to know that we are part of a family who raise gentlemen and honourable men, and more than this,

..... MEN!!!

FRIDAY, MARCH 17,

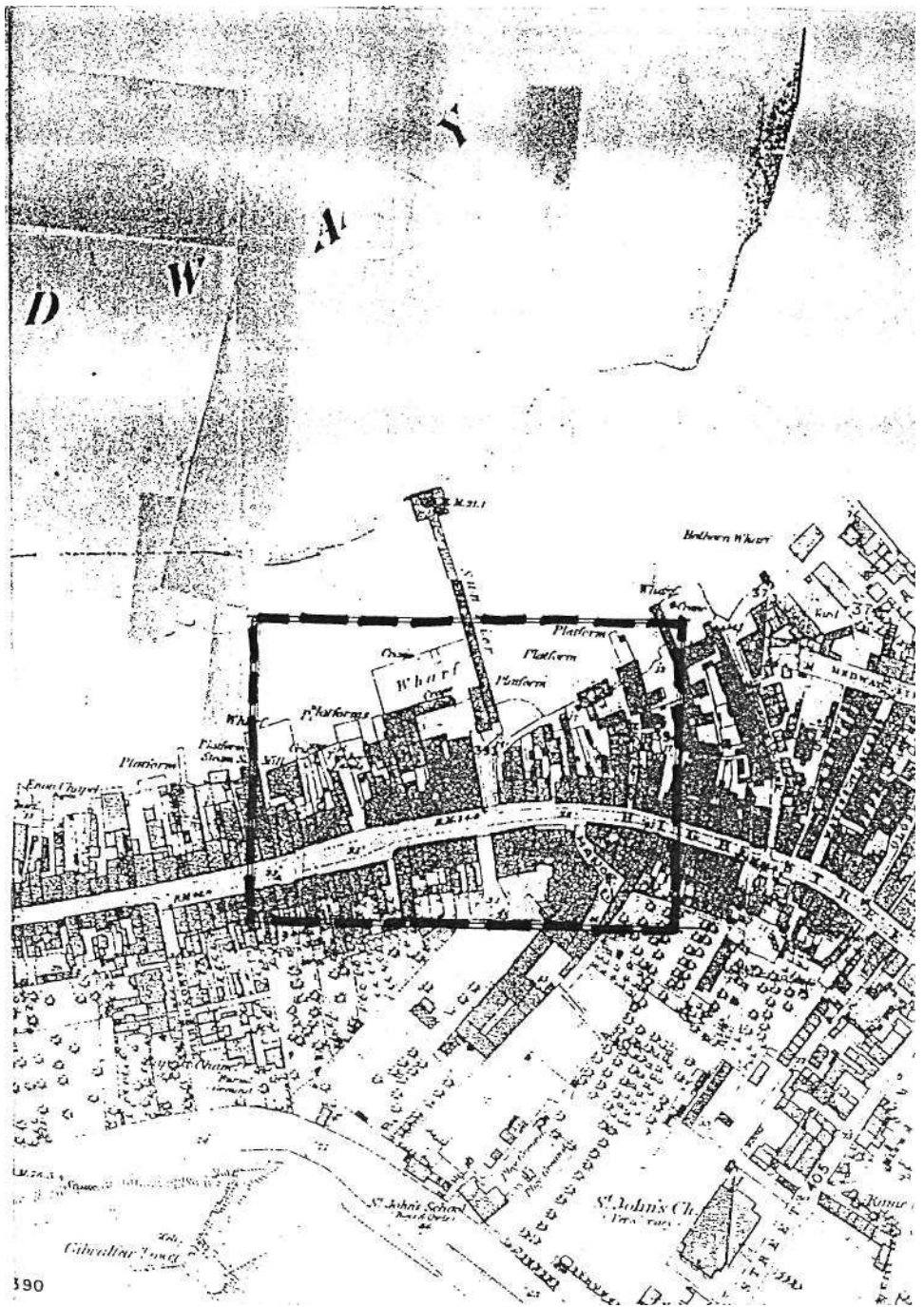


AREA TO F FIRE 300 MARCH 1890
 THIS FIRE COVERED ALMOST THE SAME AREA
 AS THE FIRE IN 1800. NOTE = SUN PIECE.



Sun Piece

R I Y E R M E D W A Y



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