



**Vol.12.N0.2.**

**Summer 1998**

## **OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY**

Honorary Life President	Mrs. Kim Cook, 18, Hawkhurst Way, West Wickham Kent BR4 9PF
Honorary Life Vice-President	The Rev. David E. Witheridge 2425 Irving Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minn. 55405 USA
Chairman	Mr. Graham Browne, 5, Greenhill Avenue, Luton Beds. LU2 7DN
Vice Chairwoman	Mrs. Joyce Stephens, 95, Phelipps Road, Corfe Mullen, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 3NL
Secretary/Membership Secretary	Mr. John Witheridge, 6, Prestbury Avenue, Clayton, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs. ST5 4QY

(For all communication with the Guild of One Name Studies)

(To be sent new applications and all renewals of Society membership, complete with subscriptions)

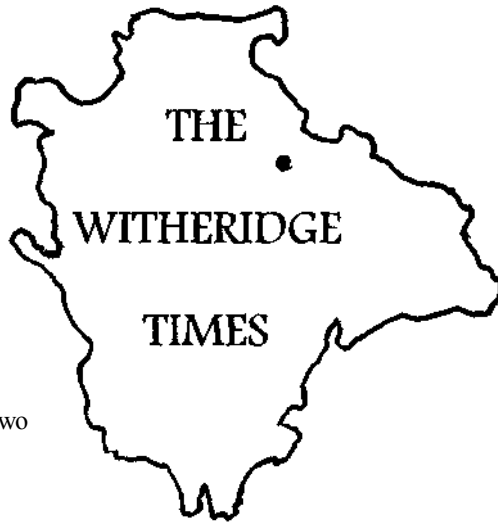
Treasurer and Research Co-ordinator	Mr. Richard Witheridge, 2, Apsley Road, Newbridge, Bath Somerset BA1 3LP
Assistant Treasurer and Committee Member	Miss Susan Witheridge, Address as above

Editor	Mrs. Joyce Browne 5 Greenhill Avenue, Luton Beds. LU2 7DN
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(To be sent all items for publication in the Witheridge Times - family news, articles etc., and all requests for copies of the certificates held by the Society)

Publisher, Distributor and Committee Member	Mr. Philip Witheridge, The Paddocks, Gretton Fields, Nr. Winchcombe, Cheltenham, Glos. GL54 5HJ
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Continued on back cover



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Summer 1998

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## **EDITORIAL**

Greetings to all our readers! After the wettest April for three hundred years, an April awash with floods in areas not usually troubled, we had a sunny but rather cool start to May at our gathering at Winchcombe, but then came the hottest ever May days. What can we expect for summer? The contents of the magazine are as varied as the weather. This issue contains the Officers' Reports for the year, and the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting will be published later.

From Australia, Judith and Allan Witheridge have sent us a useful list of all the documents and photographs they hold. This could be a good precedent for others to follow. Dorothy Witheridge has sent us an account of the last Australian picnic, and also from Australia - a touching love story. Perhaps we could have more of those?

Kim has unravelled the mystery disappearance of a member of her Wembury family, and it has made a fascinating story. We may be stirred out of entrenched ideas about ourselves by another contributor. Guess who??? Why John of course!

Please keep your ideas and stories coming!



## **FAMILY NEWS**

Our news this time is of a sad nature. We regret to report the death of member Mrs. Irene Birdsall, of South Darlington. Irene, who was of the Combe Martin family and related to David Witheridge of Minneappolis, had intended to come to the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary meeting at Tiverton last year, but was prevented by having to undergo a serious operation. This appeared to be successful at first, but the eventual outcome was not good and Irene died on the 14<sup>th</sup> April, 1998. Our thoughts and sympathies are with her husband and family.

Our member Brenda Dwyne, of Hamilton, Ontario, has suffered the loss of her mother, who had been resident in a Nursing Home for some time. Brenda's mother was Sylvia Maude Clarke, née Witheridge, of the Northmore Witheridge family of Ermington.

It is always painful to lose one's mother, however incapacitated she may have been, and we send our sympathy to Brenda and her family.



## **WITHERIDGE DAY, 4<sup>th</sup> MAY 1998 Report by Joyce Browne**

We attended the eleventh Annual General Meeting of the Society with great expectation of a lively meeting and we were not disappointed. Seventeen adults and one baby met at the White Hart Hotel, Winchcombe, near Cheltenham. Winchcombe is a quaint place built in the mellow Cotswold stone which is so attractive in the sunlight. We thought that we had planned a day which would allow members to leave the meeting venue in the afternoon and explore on their own if they so wished. In the event this did not seem to happen.

Good wishes were received from our Vice President, The Rev. David Witheridge in Minneapolis, and from Judith and Allan Witheridge in Figtree, Australia who were with us last year. Velma Metcalfe sent greetings from New Zealand.

We missed our old friends Tom and Sheila Jewell, but we understand that Tom is making a good recovery from the serious road accident he had earlier in the year, and we also missed the cheerful face of Ernest Hamley.

Kathy and Paul Witheridge from Sarnia, Ontario were absent for the first time for several years, and we were sorry to lose their input to the meeting, but we were able to meet them when they came to see Graham and I for a week end visit later.

The morning was taken up by the AGM, and the Officer's Reports are included in the magazine. There was discussion on a proposal by Kim that there should be a committee member especially charged with the task of exploring what can be done to attract and maintain the interest of younger members of our families. It was decided to appoint an extra committee member with these responsibilities to liaise with one of the younger members of our existing committee, and Jason Cook and Mark Witheridge agreed to undertake this task.

There was a suggestion that the Witheridge Society should have a Web Site on the Internet. Pros and Cons were put forward and discussed, but no conclusion was reached on this, leaving members to have further ideas and put proposals later if they wished.

Another lengthy discussion took place on the venues for next year's meeting and that for the millenium year 2000, covering both the question of the venues and the nature of the events. Interesting ideas were put forward and while it was agreed to have a one day event next year, a three day event is contemplated for the year 2000.

A buffet lunch was taken in the conference room and we were able to talk and mix with friends. Kim donated a selection of plants to be raffled, and her daughter-in-law, Zoe, had made us a delicious cake, which we consumed at tea time.

John opened the afternoon session with a talk on his research. He pointed out that his investigations had led him to think that perhaps we should not regard our name to be Saxon in origin, and gave his reasons for thinking that it might have older British beginnings. He drew our attention to many sources of information and areas of research, and spoke of one of his favourite areas - that into the lives of two captains in Oliver Cromwell's Navy - John and Edward Witheridge. These two men lived fascinating and exciting lives and John whetted our appetites to learn more about them.

Philip and John brought their fiche readers for us to try out, and demonstrated some of their sources of information which can be had on fiche. Philip talked about knowledge he had gleaned from local newspapers and magazines.

We feasted our eyes on the beautiful wall hanging which June Witheridge had made for a friend's Ruby Wedding, and admired not only the handiwork, but the imaginative symbolism which portrayed episodes in the lives of her friends. Unfortunately, June could only bring a small selection of her work. Terry Stephens had produced an unusual family tree which was much admired - I for one regretted that I had not had enough time to ask him how he did it

As we looked at the exhibits and ate Zoe's cake we were reluctant to observe our deadline of 5.0 p.m, when Kim had to close the meeting. Everyone agreed that we all looked forward to next year.



### ON THE NET YET???



Members Kathy and Paul Witheridge of Samia, Ontario, Canada, have given me their e-mail address for publication so that other members who are on the Internet can communicate with them by this means if they wish. It is:-

kathpaul@ebtech.net

If other readers would like to communicate by this means, then if they send me, the Editor their e-mail address, it can be published in the magazine - but remember - I can only receive 'snail mail'!

## LAMENT FOR A LOSS

by Joyce Browne

This lament is for the loss of an industry - an industry which brought death and hardship to some, but at its peak employed some 30,000 people and affected the lives of some of our Witheridge families. The industry of which I write is that of tin mining, once so familiar in Cornwall and Devon, but now gone, probably for ever.

The last tin mine in Europe closed on the 6<sup>th</sup> March, 1998, when the last ore was dug from South Crofty Mine, Camborne, in south Cornwall. The miners say that there is plenty of tin to be had from South Crofty, but the Canadian Company which owns the mine says that it is uneconomical to produce. Pleas for government subsidies fell on deaf ears, and South Crofty followed other well known mines such as Wheal Jane which have closed in recent years.

Everyone who has been to Cornwall must have seen the chimneys of the disused smelting 'blowing' houses which litter the countryside and some of the coastline, and everyone should take warning to be careful when walking on some heath land and some parts of Dartmoor, as there is a danger of falling into a disused mine shaft.

There have been peaks and troughs in the industry before, but this has a finality which saddens the local population. Tin working began BC, in the Bronze Age, at first the metal was streamed from the rivers and top soil, then open cast working was practised. The trade in tin was recorded in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and perhaps we do not now recognise that it was the Tanners who built the first pack horse bridges in Devon and Cornwall. To us they are part of the romantic countryside, but they had the serious purpose of allowing the pack ponies to convey tin to centres where it could be weighed and stamped before sale.

The picturesque bridges of Postbridge, Dartmeet and Belliver are three examples of bridges needed to allow the ponies to cross streams in summer and winter and bring their valuable loads to centres of trade such as Ashburton, Chagford, Plympton and Tavistock. These places were known as Stannary Towns and they were granted licences to weigh and assess the quality of metals, and permit their sale.

Shaft mining had replaced open cast working by the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and production reached a peak. Life was very hard for the miners. There were no mechanical means of lowering them to the working surface, and they had to climb up and down ladders. This sometimes took them so long that they stayed underground for several days at a time, eating and sleeping where they worked. The industry declined in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but revived in the 18<sup>th</sup>, when more mechanical aid was possible, and there was greater demand for the product. Trade was so improved that many villages experienced a wave of prosperity, not

only from the mines themselves but as spin off industries developed.

In St. Agnes, Cornwall, in 1793 a new harbour was built to handle the trade in tin and other metals. It was constructed with great difficulty, but wild storms, particularly in this century, have swept it away. From the nearby hill of St. Agnes Beacon all that can be seen of a once great industry are ruins of the blowing houses of bygone mines.

Foreign competition in the 19<sup>th</sup> century precipitated another decline, and it was at this period that some of our Witheridge families were affected, and decided to leave their homes for Australia and New Zealand, and Tyneside. By the 1890s very few mines were left. Wheal Jane was one of the last to close 'wheal' means 'mine' in the Cornish language, and now the very last one, South Crofty, has gone for ever. What will happen to the miners is worrying - there is very little industry in Cornwall, farming is in decline, and it seems as if Devon and Cornwall are becoming more and more dependant on tourism. Which is why we lament.



#### LIST OF COPIES OF PHOTOGRAPHS, DOCUMENTS, ARTICLES, ETC., HELD BY

Allan and Judith Witheridge  
57, Outlook Drive,  
Figtree,  
NSW 2525      Australia

Beginning with Philemon Witheridge      and      Mary Carvath  
b 1846 Watchet      b 1852 Porthleven  
married 9<sup>th</sup> November, 1871      at Porthleven, Cornwall

- Marriage Certificate Philemon and Mary, 1871
- Photograph of Philemon and Mary with granddaughter Mavis Deamer c. 1920
- Photograph of Philemon c. 1915
- Photograph of grave location and one of double headstone of Philemon and Mary taken in 1993 at Berry, New South Wales.

Children of Philemon and Mary:

- Jane (Kennedy) b.c 1878 - no information as yet
- Martha (Down) b. 1879 - two portraits, one of Martha and her husband, and one with their children Ruth, Richard and Robert.
- Mary (Deamer) b 1881 photograph of Mary and her husband Joe (Albert)
- Philemon b 1883 - wedding photograph with wife Katie (McDonald)



- Thomas b. 1884 - portrait pre-war. Photo in uniform, with brothers Robert\* and William and brother-in-law Tom Coffey. Portrait in uniform c 1915? From a Museum collection.  
Nowra Memorial Gates\* Inscription from same, both Thomas and Robert\*
- Robert b. 1885 - portrait in uniform with wife Jean (Byles). Photograph of group of recovering amputees in UK.
- \*Others as for Thomas.
- Annie b. 1887 - wedding photograph with husband Tom Brown.
- Joseph b. 1888 - wedding photograph with wife Ada (Innes) including Ada's brother Clarrie, who was best man.
- William b. 1890 - photograph with wife Rose (Innes)
- Esther b. 1891 wedding photograph with husband Fred Graham
- Elizabeth b 1893 portrait photograph
- Maude b 1894 photograph only in a group (1) on a picnic (2) at a wedding
- Jacob b. 1897 photograph with his mother (Mary nee Carvarth) and his niece Mavis Deamer
- Group photograph on a picnic c.1910 showing Katie McDonald (later married Philemon Witheridge) her mother, Maude Witheridge, Lizzie, Esther, Mary, Martha and Annie Witheridge, Percy Down and Tom Brown and two children (possibly Ruth Down and Amy Brown)
- Group photograph at a wedding c. 1946:- Annie, Maude, Lizzie, Mary, Martha and Esther (Probably at wedding of Joan Coffey and Bob Down)
- Copy marriage certificate, William and Rose, 1921
- Obituary William Witheridge 1962
- Obituary Rose 1990
- Family photographs, and access to other information, of William, Thomas, Allan, Jack, Philemon (Toby) and Alma and families.
- Thanksgiving service booklet for Tom Witheridge (died 1996)
- The Love Story of Pat and Tom, as told by Pat
- Newspaper article on Toby and his family's fishing interests.
- Newspaper photograph on Christopher's wife's line dancing
- Photographs taken at 1995 and 1997 Witheridge Picnic Days



## THE CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT, MAY 1998

I think that I can say that the Society has had a successful year. I do not wish to anticipate the Reports of the Officers of the Society, which you have before you, but I can say that each Officer has worked very hard, not only within the confines of his or her special capacity, but had reached out to collaborate with other members and exchange help and information.

Our Secretary, John has worked valiantly to keep in touch with our members, home and abroad, and I feel that we should all ask ourselves how best to keep the interest of both 'home' and overseas members, and promote the concept of a family Society of interest to all generations.

Thanks to our Treasurer, Richard, the financial position is sound. Our Editor and Printer have ensured that the Witheridge Times has been circulated regularly. The aim of our magazine is to disseminate information and items of interest to all members, and we have kept to an optimum of 28 pages in order to keep down production costs and postal charges.

Our Canadian, Australian and New Zealand representatives have each played their part in promoting the Society, seeking out information and keeping us informed of research, and making new contacts, for which we give them our sincere thanks.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary meeting last year was a great success. There were 49 adults at the AGM., at Tiverton, and 38 people on the coach trip which took place the following day. These events were reported in the magazine. The very success of this venture did, however, raise problems. It was suggested that we repeat the format, or something like it, for this year's AGM. Accordingly we contacted or wrote to the members of the Committee, and some overseas members, to ascertain the likelihood of support for such a venture this year, but the overwhelming response was, that while people would like to support such an event, they felt unable to do so for this year.

During the year, Kim raised the question of considering venues for the AGM at least two years in advance, and this has been in the minds of myself and the Committee, and I hope that this will be discussed in due course.

I regret to say that the new handbook has not yet materialised. Work has been done on this, especially by Richard, but the project has proved to be more difficult and time consuming than expected. However, it is nearer production than it was, and it certainly has not been forgotten. We can look forward to a year of endeavour on the part of our researchers, as they try to validate information gained on our known families, and seek out new areas of interest.

I wish to give my thanks to you and all the Committee members for their support.

SIGNED: GRAHAM BROWNE

Chairman

## THE WITHERIDGE SOCIETY

### REPORT OF THE SECRETARY/MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY 1997/1998

Once again to save time and space in printing and reading I will incorporate both reports as one.

Life, as always, has been very hectic, starting with our Tiverton meeting last year. I sent out circulars to all Witheridge addresses that are known, but life and Society work did not ease up, they kept moving at the same momentum right through to the present time. Perhaps our changing abode made life hard.

The Society has been very successful in contacting new members and indeed other Witheridge and non Witheridge named descendants. This is the best part of my work for the Society and I enjoy it very much, but sadly it leaves me very little time to spend in writing letters to existing members. I do try to maintain at least one or two per year, but in some cases I know that I have not achieved this. To those concerned please accept my apologies, I will try to do better this coming year. I will not inform you of the amount of letters with which I am involved, a yearly report on figures must bore you, but it is more than in previous years.

I also had some correspondence on a constitutional issue which caused me concern. This was to do with a proposal to change the venue for the AGM to one which had not been agreed at the previous meeting. This matter has now been resolved, but the point had to be made that decisions arrived at and Minuted at the AGM should be carried out wherever possible.

In matters of research I have been able to address new fields of Witheridge material:- find a 'Sir Witheridge', and possibly a new source of Witheridge ancestry. This might even become two sources.

Joyce and I have joined the Quaker Society to further research on certain Witheridge families.

I have found an absolutely first class selection of State papers, and State papers covering our interests abroad where we have located much Witheridge history and answers to our long standing un-answered questions.

As always I have continued to follow research into the families who through marriage have left the Witheridge name behind them. To my way of thinking we need to follow these families to find those who may be interested in their Witheridge ancestry, and who may be future members of our Society.

My great interest in the Berrynarbor and Combe Martin families has been further infused by the input from our newer members of those families. I look forward to producing further research articles and these being printed in our magazine.

We seem to be losing members, some because their illness and ages make it hard for them to continue as active members, and some, I suspect, because interest is waning. In some instances it may be because I have been unable to write to them as much as I have in the past. We will continue to post magazines to these members for the coming year (1998) as we always have done for lapsed membership in the past. This in the hope that resigning members reading this report will remain members, and by doing so will be content to just read and enjoy our magazine each quarter. Certainly we would prefer these members to remain as members, even if in a reduced capacity. Should this not be acceptable, then we would like to express our love, and wish them all happiness for the future, hoping that some contact can be made from time to time.

SIGNED: JOHN WITHERIDGE Secretary and Membership Secretary



#### RESEARCH REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> MAY 1998

This year our researchers have again been busy looking for further information to add to our evergrowing data. Some of the research is ongoing from that previously carried out and some is new.

John has reported that he has researched the Lancashire and Cumbria Witheridges, and from this has built up two trees, one in each county, and he is near to forming a link between them. One of the families is reported to be headed by a "Sir Witheridge" so we are now moving up into the Elite!! Magazine article to follow.

Captains John and Edward Witheridge are still being researched, and John is now looking at the Quaker connections in the Buckinghamshire area, and researching into the death of Captain John, on the Bonaventure, and the truth about Captain Edward and the mermaid!!!

Tavistock/Australian family history nearing completion  
Combe Martin/Melbourne family history nearing completion  
Bideford/Australian family twist!  
New Witheridge families in the Stafford area and surrounding counties.  
The town of MOLD in North Wales. Witheridge connection?  
North Devon heirloom and Mansion house??

John is busy as always as you can see above.

Joyce reports that she also has been involved with the Tavistock/Australia family and she received a letter giving possible connection with the Percy family in Australia.

Trying to research the possibility that Margaret Brooking, widow, who married John Witheridge in Exeter in 1728, may have been Margaret Baker before marriage to a Brooking.

Newton Ferrers records again being researched.

Searching for information on James Witheridge who died March quarter 1914 aged 75, at Newport Mon.

Also looking for information on James Witheridge, seaman, thought to be the father of James William Witheridge, born Plymouth 1856. Both Joyce and Philip have been working on this. Maritime records need to be checked now.

Joyce is also trying to check out two names on the Army list which Joyce Stephens sent to her - Frank Lionel Witheridge, thought to be Joyce's uncle and always understood to have been a sailor, and George Witheridge of the Devonshire Regiment who was killed on the Somme.

Joyce has also informed me that she has a CD Rom of the complete books of Emigrants to America between 1607 and 1776, and is willing to search for names, other than Witheridges (she has already searched for Witheridges) in which members may be interested. These listings show those who were sent as convicts, or servants, and includes some travelling on business. It shows the port of embarkation and the name of the ship. Joyce has also received further Devon Parish record searches, census returns etc., from Sheila Jewell.

Velma Metcalfe in New Zealand has been busy and has sent Joyce Baptism, Marriage and Burial lists for Berrynarbor and Combe Martin. She has also included some census returns for Combe Martin and monumental inscriptions from Combe Martin, Lynton and Ilfracombe, all of which show some Witheridges.

Kim has told me that she intends to explore all the places which contain the name of Witheridge, i.e., Witheridge Hall, Witheridge Farm, etc., throughout the country. I also understand that she is checking out the Parish of Stepney in London with reference to Captain Edward Witheridge.

Kathy has sent me a copy of some of the research that she is doing, some on a Thomas Witheridge who was baptised at Bradworthy on March 22<sup>nd</sup> 1795. Also shown is a photograph of his and his wife's gravestone in Ebenezer cemetery, Darlington, Canada. Another gravestone found is to a child, Thomas Witheridge Foster, son of a John/Elizabeth Jane Foster. This leads to a connection with the Foster family and Kathy checked and found Foster names in the 1861/1871/1881/1891 and 1901 census for Bowmanville. The cemetery records and newspapers for Bowmanville also show information. I am sure Kathy will present this information in the magazine at a later date. If anyone has any information on any of the above please contact the researcher.

SIGNED: RICHARD H. WITHERIDGE Research Co-ordinator May 1998

## THE WITHERIDGE SOCIETY

### FINANCIAL REPORTS FOR YEAR ENDING 30<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 1998

This year's financial report has been more difficult to present owing to the payments made to the Society's bank for the special Witheridge Day events. However, I have finally completed it and tried to show, not only the overall income/expenditure, but also to show where possible the Witheridge Day income/expenditure.

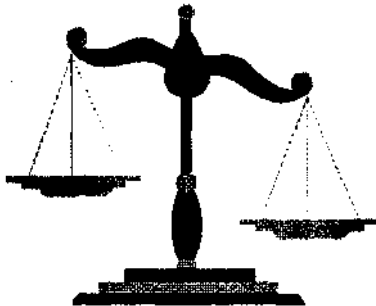
As a matter of interest, actual costs to the Society for the Witheridge weekend events work out to £211. 47.

Some charges have understandably risen due to increases in postal charges and printing paper, etc.

Despite the outlays mentioned above, our total balance in the bank this year is still standing at a reasonable level of £817.85. This is due to the income from membership fees which continues to grow thanks to the untiring efforts of our Secretary.

As we appear to be maintaining this level each year there seems to be no need to increase the membership fee for this year.

SIGNED: R.H. WITHERIDGE    Treasurer



**WITHERIDGE FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY 10TH ANNIVERSARY INCOME AND EXPENDITURE MAY 1997.**

**INCOME.**

Coach trip deposits paid into bank before 21 April 1997 this includes a deposit paid for Mr & Mrs Jewel, paid by G Browne (£4)	£ 130.07	
Coach trip deposits paid into bank after 21st April 1997	£ 12.00	
Collections from members on coach. Cash + cheque £20.	£ 114.00	
Cheque from Mrs Rossiter later, due to wrong collection on the coach.	<u>£ 8.00</u>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>£ 264.07</u></b>	<b>£264.07</b>

Cash from sales and raffle	£ 71.10	
Donations Mrs Bissel Cheque	£ 10.00	
Mrs Jewel Cash	£ 10.00	
Mrs Stephens Cash	£ 5.00	
Mr P H Witheridge Cheque	<u>£ 30.00</u>	
	<u>£126.10</u>	£126.10
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b><u>£390.17</u></b>

**EXPENDITURE**

Use of Topaz conference room at Hotel	£ 30.00
Buffet meal for 50 people® £5.00 per head.	£250.00
Cost of coach trip on Sunday 4th May 1997	£ 185.00
Pay John Usmar for preparing and printing notes on WITHERIDGE village.	£ 10.00
Present for Tom Jewel for talk and courier service.	£ 30.00
Original donation to Combe Martin Church.	£ 30.00
Donation to WITHERIDGE hall fund.	£ 30.00
Repayment made to Tony Witheridge on coach.	
Overpaid due to exchange rate.	£ 2.07
Repayment to Col Anthony Witheridge. Refund due to non travel on account of death in family.£4.00 Not Cashed.	
Repayment to Irene Birdsall due to non attendance through illness	£ 2.00
Cost of printing Witheridge day booklets and reminders	<u>£ 32.57</u>
	<u>£601.64</u>

**COST TO SOCIETY**

**£211.47**

*R H Witheridge*

R H Witheridge. May 1998.

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR YEAR ENDING 30TH APRIL 1998****INCOME.**

Brought forward from 1996/97		£897.23
Membership Subscriptions	£676.00	
Donations to Society	£ 12.00	
Printing on Witheridge Day	£ 00.00	
Sales of Back copies of Magazines	£ 00.00	
Interest in Membership Secretaries at	£ .57	
Photo copies for David Davis	£ 2.00	
Transferred from Secretaries account	TOTAL	<u>£690.57</u>
		£690.57
<b><u>Income for 10th Anniversary Weekend</u></b>		
Coach trip deposits paid in before April 1997 statement no 121, amounting to £130.07. This is already included with the above amount £897.23 brought forward from 1997.		
Cheque for hotel room booking deposit for two double rooms, and coach trip deposit for 4 people.**		£ 48.00
Cheque for coach trip deposit		£ 4.00
Coach trip collection of remaining fees	£94.00	
Raffle and sales at AGM.	£71.10	
Cheque for coach trip fee	£20.00	
<u>Donations to Society.</u>		
Cash	£10.00	
Cash	£ 5.00	
Cheque	<u>£10.00</u>	
	£210.10	£210.10
Cheque		£ 30.00
Cheque for £8 for coach trip and £3.50 pay back to Witheridge Society bank.***}		£ 11.50
Membership fee paid by Eve Witheridge.		£ 36.00
Donations to Combe Martin Church following magazine appeal.Four cheques.		£ 50.00
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>£1977.40</u></b>

\*\* Kim Cook to take room booked by P H Witheridge, who received refund of deposit £20.

•••See explanation at end of expenditure sheet

**EXPENDITURE**Special 10th Anniversary Witheridge Day.

Hire of Topaz room in Hotel	£ 30.00
Buffet meal for 50 people at £5.00 per head	£250.00
Coach trip on Sunday 4th May 1997	£185.00
Payment to John Usmar for printing notes on Witheridge Village.	£ 10.00
Present to Tom Jewel for talk on Saturday and acting as Coach Guide on Sunday.- £30.00. Taken from £33.50 drawn on Society bank.	
(£3.50 repaid to bank,)**	£ 33.50
Donation to Witheridge Hall fund	£ 30.00
Initial Donation to Combe Martin Church	£ 30.00
Repayment to Tony Witheridge. Overpaid due to exchange rate. Cash refund on coach.	
Repayment to Col Anthony Witheridge. Non attendance due to family bereavement. £4 not cashed	
Repayment to Irene Birdsall. Non attendance due to illness.	£ 2.00
Repayment to Philip H Witheridge unable to attend.**	£ 20.00
Pay Hotel booking from cheque received above(£48)**	£ 20.00
Payment to Federation of Family History	£ 25.00
Pay Philip H Witheridge account for printing.	£314.40
Pay John M Witheridge account for Secretarial work.	£184.65
Wreath for Jean Witheridge funeral.	£ 25.00

TOTAL £1159.55

**FINAL BALANCE**

**£817.85**

\*\*\*Meal for Mr & Mrs Jewel originally paid by R Witheridge and reclaimed from Society bank. Cheque then received from Mr & Mrs Browne to cover, so £30.00 used to pay for present for Mr Jewel and £3.50 repaid to Society bank.

Bank statement for April 1998 should read £821.85. No further expenses envisaged before April.

We the undersigned believe the above to be an accurate statement of the current financial standing for the Witheridge Society for the year ending -30th April 1998.

*R Witheridge* 12/2/98.  
R H Witheridge.  
Treasurer. Dated  
*S L Witheridge* 13/2/98  
S L Witheridge.  
Assistant Treasurer. Dated  
*A. Browne*  
Auditor. Dated 20.2.98.



## THE 1997 AUSTRALIAN PICNIC

by Dorothy Witheridge, Australian Representative, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 1997

The day arrives, the 26<sup>th</sup> October. The sun is shining. This year we are going to be in with a chance of a dry day. Brad, my son, drove me down to the site and then went on the visit his uncle Jim to acquire family news.

We have had an excellent attendance. In all thirty five adults and ten children - here is a list of their names.

Jack and Rita Witheridge  
Bob and Shirley Noad  
Greig and Karen Witheridge and Dean (13) Joel (12)  
Allan and Judith Witheridge  
Ian and Silvana Witheridge and Matt (4) Giverny (2)  
Neil and Rowena Witheridge Katherine (6) Timothy (4) Phillip (2)  
Alma and John Templeman  
Rod Templeman  
Bill and Margaret Witheridge  
Joseph and Marion Witheridge  
Terry and Leanne Marshall and Phoebe (8) Louis(6)  
John Witheridge  
Paul and Sonia Witheridge  
Robyn and Garry Elder (Tom Coffey)  
Harold and Anne Newman  
Mavis and Len Blissett  
Sue Holmes  
Pat and Phil Clifford (Marion and Joe's sister)  
Brad Witheridge  
Dorothy Witheridge

A great day was had by all

Dorothy Witheridge

## THE LOVE STORY OF PAT AND TOM WITHERIDGE

written by Pat Witheridge, 1997

Tom Witheridge came to Emerald Hill - a small village and farming community in the north west of new South Wales - as Assistant Station Master on the railways. I was living with my family on a nearby property and as everyone knows everyone else in those small places we soon became friends. At this time I was going with Ron who lived in Sydney. I told Tom that Ron and I were to be married later on - though we were not officially engaged. Tom and I were both shy people, that probably drew us together.

At this time we had the wettest season imaginable - we could not get out of our farm for six weeks and Tom had great difficulties getting to work. During this time Tom phoned every day and we had long conversations. I heard all about his family - there seemed to be so many of them - there were only two in our family.

I often told Tom that he was only infatuated with me - not in love, as I felt we hadn't known one another long enough - he never would agree. Tom's spare time was taken up with sport. He was an A grade tennis player and like to play cricket as well. So that didn't leave a lot of time for us.

Anyway Ron and I decided to go our own ways for a while until I made up my mind, as by this time I was pretty mixed up, and wasn't sure which way my feelings were the stronger.

Ron was three hundred miles away whilst Tom was on the spot and it was decided that Ron would come up later on and see how we all felt. By this time I was working in Gunnedah, a nearby town where Tom was living.

When I saw Ron I knew who I was really in love with - I was deeply upset about hurting Tom, but I knew I couldn't say "Yes" to him as the feelings were stronger on his side than mine. Whereas with Ron we just wanted to be together always.

The boys got to know each other, and I remember Tom saying that he couldn't dislike Ron because he was such a nice chap, and he felt that I would be all right.

One year later Ron and I married and one year further on Tom moved away.

Ron and I had only five wonderful years together before he died from a stroke. We had a small daughter. I was devastated.

Ten years later on Tom was attending a wedding in Sydney of one of his former tennis partners from Gunnedah and decided to come to Gunnedah on his next holidays, which he did and contacted my Dad who was very ill at the time, and so we met again.

I was surprised to learn that Tom had never married. He told me that he had decided long before that if he couldn't marry me then he would never marry. I certainly didn't know that - I had hoped that he would go on with his life, marry and be happy. But that's true love I guess! He still wanted us to marry, so twelve months later we married.

I certainly was never sorry, he was a wonderful husband, stepfather and grandfather.

We had twentyeight very happy years together, and loved each other deeply until his death from cancer on the 5<sup>th</sup> November, 1996.

Signed: Pat Witheridge

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*John Witheridge has supplied some background to this story which may help those of us who were puzzled by the name 'Pat' when we thought that, according to our records, Tom Witheridge had married a lady named 'Heather Chalk'.*

'Pat' is Heather Chalk, née Baker, who married Thomas Witheridge at Tamworth, New South Wales, Australia on the 8<sup>th</sup> June, 1968. Thomas was the son of William Witheridge b. 1890, and Rosie, née Innes. Thomas was born on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 1924, at Nowra NSW He died at Gunnedah on 5<sup>th</sup> November, 1996.

Tom worked on the railways, and was posted down the track from Emerald Hill to a smaller station, where he had the prospect of becoming Station Master when the existing holder of the job retired, and where he met 'Pat' - Heather.

In the years intervening between the time when Pat married Ron Chalk, and the time Tom and she met again after she was widowed, Tom became a good tournament tennis player in both singles matches and doubles and mixed doubles.

*(What a thrill it would have been if we had seen a Witheridge at Wimbledon!)*



## FAMILY RESEARCH

by John Witheridge from a talk given on Witheridge Day 1998

Research into family history can be likened to a bottomless pit. The deeper you reserach the greater amount you will find that needs your attention. Even the fundamental areas of achievement can suddenly seem insignificant as new items are revealed. Take for instance our firm beliefs concerning the origin of our name - Witheridge and all its variations. We have searched high and low to locate an exact source for these origins.

The township (or village) of Witheridge must be the most obvious. The lost areas in South Devon of 'Withyhedge' are probably the source of the south Devon families. In many letters to new members of our Society I list the following as possible sources:-

"Most Witheridge family trees and history can be traced back to Devon." It would be easy to say to you that we all originate from the ancient country town of Witheridge, bur this is not entirely accurate. The town and estate of Witheridge is recorded as being listed in the Domesday book 1066/76, and the Exeter book - 1080s. In fact 'Witheridge' was there long before the Norman conquest in 1066. It is known that King Harold owned lands in this area, but at the moment our earliest recorded Witheridge persons are as follows:-

Adam de Witheryete	recorded lay subsidy	1332 North Molton
Robert de Whiteruge	" " "	1332 Brendon
William de Wytheridg	" " "	1332 Hayridge
Ralph de Wyperug	" " "	1279 Oxford

( A lay subsidy was a tax)

Please note the variations in spelling.

This is typical of the name which we have had passed to us through the ages, and part of the examples for our name's construction and evolution that I use at lectures. Perhaps by was of an amusing trial we could insert all vowels within our name and still come to an understandable sounding Witheridge name as long as we used the consonants W.T H.D.G. In fact the more (e numbers) within the spelling the more healthy the strain of Witheridge???

Our earliest recorded use of the place name (for this is how the family was named) is found in the Oxford Dictionary of English place names as follows:

From the Hundred of Witheridge: Witric and Wetrige

From the Geld Rolls 1034: Wederig 1167, Wederinge 1168 Witherigge 1175

From the town of Witheridge: Wiriga 1086 (Doomsday Book), Wyrig 1242 Wetherigge 1249, Wytherigge 1256-1262 (Feet of Fines)

As you see there is a possible link to the town of Witheridge because Adam, Robert, William and Ralph were all 'de Witheridge' - 'de' meaning 'of'. It may be that they were all related, but it is more likely that they all originated from the same town (not that it would be a very big town so everyone living there could be related in some way) and this probably brings us back to the same source. As yet, we have not been able to connect any of our families to the Witheridges named above, but we are working at it!

Now I wish to shake the tree of acceptability to see how Eve's apple will fall - agreeing or disagreeing?

#### WIRIGA 1086 DOOMSDAY BOOK DEVON

It is now transpiring that the early concepts of our family background may not be exactly as we thought. In recent months I have found new evidence that might take our family back to times before the arrival of the Angles, Saxons and Jutes. These were the Germanic tribes who conquered Britain in the fourth and fifth centuries. It was always assumed that we owed our name to their language and settlement. Indeed there is evidence that they had a bearing on our family, but my recent research has given me hope that our families date back to the early Britons. Let me explain: Devon and Cornwall have always been regarded as areas that were not fully conquered by the Angles and Saxons. There are other areas that were not completely subjugated, these are Wales and Cumbria. Another area in the country with known Witheridge connections is the county of Kent. I lived there for a great number of years, using the area's history as a source of much research.

In the eighth and ninth centuries the Kings of Canteras (Kent) fought bitterly with the Danes. One king of Kent had two sons, one of whom was named Whithred who owned a property called 'Wirig/a'. Yes, the same name as above though spelt differently. He gave Wirig to the monks at Canterbury where a monastery was built. This is an early Kentish link to our name, but in more modern times Kent was a familiar county for our family.

Cumbria Recently I have found evidence to the existence of a Sir Whittrigge in a long lost area named Whittrigge. Where this was exactly I have yet to establish as we have two choices, but I am assured that it was close to our Cumbrian lakes. Again we have much evidence in this area with a family variation of Wi/etterigge. To me this is most important. Wales Last but certainly not least is Wales. At present I live very close to this area and I travel almost daily in Wales. From quite a young age I always tried to pronounce the Welsh town names as the locals would speak the words perhaps from a perverse desire to copy this difficult language. It came to my notice that a town the English called **MOLD** in central North Wales was spelt in the Welsh language Y WIDDGRUGGE. Not much to

go on I imagine you to think, but in this lovely language there is no sound for DD. It is sounded as "TH". The "G" before an "R" is silent. The "U" is sounded "I", giving a well rounded "Withrigge". Could this be a central position in early Britain, from whence our name evolved? Certainly this gives room for much thought.

To interest you further - another Welsh name has come to my notice. Please, when reading the name imagine some of the families who married into the Witheridge family. Had this name not been split into two sections to fit onto a directional board/ sign post I would not have noticed it. It is the Welsh town name of Tremiercecion TREMIERE CION. (Remember the Bradworthy family?) Here are two previously accepted names, Witheridge and Tremear, both thought of as Devonshire names, coming from two towns separated by twenty to thirty miles of hills and mountains in North Wales. This adds so much more weight to my discoveries and to the arguments that I have put before you.

I fear that I am about to disprove our previously accepted theories and at the same time feel exaltation at the new possibilities of the furtherance of our histories. One part statement: - The Welsh language has long been considered as the original language of the original British peoples.

' Buckinghamshire. I refer to one last section of research that has captivated my interest in these last months: Witheridge place names in Buckinghamshire.

"Witheridge Woods" Near Penn

"Witheridge Lane" Near Penn On this lane "The Witherage Wood House"

And "Witheridge House" AND "Witheridge Lane" AND AND "West Witheridge" AND AND AND "Lower Witheridge"

These next come from the Kelly Street Directory:

Crosfield Bertram F "Witheridge"

Green-Armytage Lt. Col Paul Daayrell "Lower Witheridge"

Morrell Miss D.E. "Witherage Wood"

Szarvasy Frederick Alexander "West Witheridge"

The named location of Penn, plus the very obvious Witheridge connections has led me to make further investigations. As we already know, Admiral Sir William Penn and Captain Edward Witheridge and Captain John Witheridge were colleagues in the Commonwealth Navy in 1640 to 1660. I am not going to encroach on these facts too much here because that would spoil the impact of some other articles about these two Witheridges. Just wait and (sea)???? But please accept these facts. Since giving these details as part of my talk on Witheridge Day I have found that yet another so called Devonshire name has Welsh connections- the name "PYLE" (Combe Martin and Berrynarbor family). Pyle is located near Cardiff in South Wales.

## **SEARCHING FOR SAMUEL - AND HIS SIBLINGS!**

### **Part 1 - On the family trail**

by Kim Cook

When the Spring issue of *Wetheridge Times* arrived, I was amazed to see the results of Velma's research into British overseas records, and in particular, the mention of Samuel Wetheridge. For, by one of those odd coincidences, I had that very day been to London to do some research, and had found, among other things, the listing in the marine registers of Samuel's death in 1881 and had ordered the certificate.

The note in the *Wetheridge Times* article, mentioning that Samuel was one of the Wembury family, was quite correct. Samuel was a brother of my great-grandfather Edmund Wetheridge, although for many years we had not even known of his existence. Indeed it was a general misconception in the family that Edmund had been an only child.

My mother, Marjorie Wetheridge, born in 1912, had never known her grandfather Edmund, as he had died two years before she was born. But her older brothers and sisters, born between 1895 and 1905, had known both their Wetheridge grandparents, Edmund and Prudence, quite well, and had spent a fair amount of time at their large home on Kingston Hill.

Looking back, I suppose I must have always been a family historian by instinct, because I was always asking questions about the family. However, asking questions doesn't necessarily mean getting answers, nor does it guarantee that any answers will be correct. My mother's older brothers and sisters were a cheerful, fun-loving, happy-go-lucky bunch - one might almost say rumbustious - who enjoyed life to the full. Usually, they were too busy enjoying the present to reflect on the past or day-dream about the future. The only time they willingly harked back to the past was to recall some hilarious practical joke or jolly wheeze. Not until their later (and quieter!) years, did I learn more about their earlier days.

The exception in this was my grandfather's second child, my aunt Dorothy. True she did have that rumbustious streak, and took enormous pride in recounting how, in the 1920s, she had been summonsed for speeding and driving without lights on a motorbike! She even kept the summons till her dying day, as proof of her daring past! But she was also a romantic, a dreamer, and her brothers and sister often dismissed her as 'living in another world'. Ever keen to bestow nicknames on each other and everyone else they came into contact with, they called her 'Dossie', a word they used to imply 'dozy'.

When the rest of the family asserted that Edmund had been an only child, Dossie disagreed. She insisted that at her grandfather's funeral in 1910, she had been introduced to a

gentleman referred to as 'brother-in-law Miller'. Her siblings dismissed this as being another of her day-dreams. They remembered an 'Uncle Barry', (presumably George Uglow Barry, the younger brother of my great grandmother Prudence), but insisted that their Witheridge grandfather Edmund, born in 1849, had been a singleton. 'There are no Millers in our family' I was told. Foolishly, perhaps, I accepted the majority opinion.

Tracing the family back, I discovered from Edmund's birth certificate that his father's name was Joseph. As Edmund was born in 1849, it was obvious that Joseph must have been born pre-registration. In order to try and establish Joseph's date of birth, I needed to establish his date of death, and age at death. While checking the GRO death indexes, I came across an entry for a Joseph William Witheridge in Plymouth in 1854, and thought this must be what I was seeking. (No age was given in the index, as these are not shown for deaths prior to 1866.) Imagine my amazement when the certificate duly arrived and showed that Joseph William was a six month old child, the son of Thomas and Mary Ann, and therefore the grandson of Joseph. Young Joseph William had had pneumonia for two weeks before his death.

In some ways I was disappointed, for at the time (back in the 1960s) Roy and I were struggling to buy our first house, and expenditure on certificates had to be strictly rationed. Picking the wrong one had, from that point of view, been an expensive mistake.

However, it did open my mind again to the possibility that Edmund might have had other brothers and sisters who had survived. So, knowing that Thomas had died in 1857, I made a list of all Witheridge births in Plymouth between 1849 and 1858. I already knew where some of these children belonged, so the choice was not as great as it might otherwise have been. Among the likelier entries were two further boys, Samuel John (1851) and William James (1856), and two girls Mahala (1852) and Elizabeth Jane (1855).

Remembering Auntie Dossie's insistence that Edmund had had a brother-in-law Miller, I decided to check the marriage registers and see if either of these girls had married, and if so, whether there was a cross-reference to Miller. Both had indeed married, but there was no cross-reference to Miller for Mahala's marriage. But when I checked Elizabeth Jane, there is was! Elizabeth Jane Witheridge, born in 1855, had married, in 1877, a man named Henry Miller. This must have been Edmund's 'brother-in-law Miller'. Dossie had not been so dozy after all!

Later I managed to get a reader's ticket for the PRO (not as readily available in those days as they are now) and get access to the census returns. Eventually I found the family in the 1851 census. Living at 1 Woolster Street, in the parish of Charles the Martyr, was Joseph Witheridge, aged 60, a coal porter, with his son Thomas, aged 30, a barge man. Mary Ann his daughter-in-law, also 30, and his grandsons, Thomas H. Witheridge, aged three, Edmund, aged one, and Samuel J. aged three months. The record showed that Joseph had been born in Holsworthy, Thomas in Devonport, Mary Ann in Exeter and the three grand-



children in Plymouth.

So here was further proof that Edmund was far from being an only child. I now had a list of five children for Thomas and Mary Ann - Thomas H. born c 1847, Edmund, born 1849, Samuel John, born 1851, Joseph William, born 1853, and Elizabeth Jane born 1855.

However, there were discrepancies. There was no record of a Thomas H. Witheridge being born in 1847 or 1848, so who was this other grandson? A number of possibilities came to mind. Could he have been the child of another of Joseph's children, perhaps a married daughter, who had changed his name when adopted either by his grandfather, or by his aunt and uncle? Or could he have been born to Thomas and Mary Ann before their marriage? Or could they have gone through a non-conformist marriage ceremony without civil registration, before their official marriage in St. Andrew's Church, Plymouth, in 1848?

Mary Ann's maiden name had been Garry. If either of these last two assumptions were correct, the child would have had to be registered in the name of Garry. I checked the birth indexes for Garry, and there, in the December quarter of 1847, I found an entry for Thomas Henry Garry, born in Plymouth. The mystery was at least partially solved.

Another item of interest was Joseph's birthplace, Holsworthy. This was to lead me a merry dance. Not until I had spent years searching every parish in the Holsworthy area did I learn that this was a mistake. Joseph had been born in Wembury, over 40 miles away!

But going back to the children of Thomas and Mary Ann, I now knew what had happened, at least up to a point, to three of them. Edmund had married in 1870, Prudence White Barry, and had three children, William Henry (my grandfather, born 1870), Edmund Samuel (1872) and Olive Prudence (born 1886, after the family had moved to London). Joseph William had died of pneumonia in infancy, and Elizabeth Jane had become Mrs. Henry Miller. What happened to Thomas and Samuel?

In vain I searched the marriage and death indexes for any reference to Thomas H. Witheridge, but I did find a marriage entry for Samuel, and later I ordered the certificate. This shows that on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1878, in the Register Office at Portsea Island, in the county of Southampton, Samuel John Witheridge aged 27, married Mary Ann Cruwys, aged 24. No occupation was given for Mary Ann, but her address was given as 44 Somers Street, Portsea. Samuel's occupation is shown as Seaman RM., and his address as HM Ship *Excellent*. The writing on the certificate isn't entirely clear, and initially, I had read Samuel's occupation as Seaman, RN (Royal Navy), but I now believe that it is in fact RM (Royal Marines).

Meanwhile, I had also done some research on Mary Ann Garry's family. She was the eldest of five children born to Richard Garry and his wife Jane, née Pike. Their youngest

child was a son called Samuel John, born in 1836. Mary Ann was 16 when this little brother was born, so she must have been almost a second mother to him. He must have been a favourite of hers, for he is the only one of her family whose name she gave to one of her own children. Did her son Samuel John become a favourite in his turn? If so she must have had greatly mixed feelings of pride, sorrow and anxiety when he joined the Royal Marines and sailed off to strange lands.

My next step was to try and discover what had happened to Samuel and Mary Ann. Had they had any children? This was difficult to establish, as I didn't know whether Mary Ann had stayed in Portsea after their marriage. I thought that perhaps, once Samuel had sailed overseas, Mary Ann might have returned either to her own home town (wherever that might have been), or to south Devon to be nearer Samuel's family.

When the 1881 census index was released, I checked Witheridges in Devon, but there was no reference to Samuel. This wasn't surprising, as he could well have been at sea. As for Mary Ann, there were originally plenty to choose from, as it seemed that almost every second Witheridge had married a Mary Ann!. However there was one listing in the index that intrigued me. A Mary Ann Witheridge, aged 27, born in Wales, was working as a cook. Her status was given as 'widow'.

If this was Mary Ann Cruwys, then Samuel must have died at sea, for there was certainly no record of his death in the normal run of GRO death indexes. This led me to search the marine indexes for the years 1878 to 1881 at the Family Record Centre, where I found the entry for Samuel Witheridge, aged 30, of HMS *Boadicea*, and ordered the certificate.

I had previously seen only one marine death certificate, and it had been full of fascinating information, including the latitude and longitude of the ship. On the way home I mused about where the *Boadicea* might have been, and how Samuel met his death. Had he been lost overboard in rough seas? Had he succumbed to one of the many diseases encountered on board ship? Or had he been injured while carrying out his duties, and perhaps died of his wounds?

With all this buzzing through my head, I opened my *Witheridge Times*, and there found Velma's article mentioning Samuel! My impatience to see the certificate was now even greater. Unfortunately, I had to wait for over a week for my certificates, and when they came, Samuel's death certificate was a real surprise

The name of his ship, HMS *Boadicea* is given, but there is no entry in the column headed 'Official Number'. The date of death is given as 27 February, 1881, but the 'place of death' column is another blank. His name, sex and age are given as Saml Witheridge, Male, 30, his rank is shown as 'Qr. Master', nationality English. His last place of abode is given as Dawlish, which is a surprise. However the greatest surprise was the entry in the 'cause of death' column, which says 'Killed in action Majuba Mountain'.

I had no idea where Majuba Mountain was, and couldn't find it on any atlas or gazetteer we had. Despite the entry in the Marine Register, it certainly wasn't at sea, but it must have been somewhere where the British were at war, or involved in minor skirmishes with the natives. So where were we at war in 1881?

South Africa seemed the likeliest possibility, so I looked up the Boer and Zulu wars in a history book called *'Modern Britain'*, which I had chosen as a school prize many years ago, and is still one of my favourite reference books. Amazingly, the index contained an entry for 'Majuba Hill', so I turned to the relevant page, and made a summary of what it says.

After the Zulu war of 1879, which ended in British triumph at Ulundi, the Boers felt so safe from native attack that in 1880 they unilaterally declared independence for the Transvaal. When in 1881, an inadequate British force advanced from Natal to compel their obedience, the Boers defeated it at Majuba Hill. Rather than risk a difficult war with an uneasy conscience, Gladstone's government decided to give way, and Transvaal was granted self-government under the suzerainty of the British Crown.

A couple of pages earlier, there is a sketch map showing various battle sites, including the positions of Majuba Hill. It's a small scale map with lots of dark hatching, so that exact positions and distances are hard to gauge, but Majuba Hill seems to be about 200 miles inland, in the foothills of the Drakensburg mountains.

Could a seaman really have been killed in battle, that far inland? Was Majuba Hill the same place as Majuba Mountain? I did some more checking, and found that the battle of Majuba Hill took place on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1881, the day Samuel Witheridge was killed. This was undoubtedly the right place. A brief report of the battle showed that the meagre British troops were surrounded and overwhelmed by a large force of Boers, who captured the British and their guns, and then turned those guns on the few British survivors. It was a dreadful and ultimately pointless battle that wasted many lives.

So how did Samuel come to be part of this meagre force? One clue comes from his marriage certificate which lists his ship as HMS *Excellent*. I had assumed, apparently quite wrongly, that this was an ordinary ship. However, in the PRO Guide to Admiralty Records, there is a reference to 'Officers who have passed HMS *Excellent* (gunnery school)'.

Although Samuel was not a commissioned officer, there must have been ratings on HMS *Excellent*, both to support the officers who were being trained, and to be trained themselves. And I knew that the Royal Marines had long been responsible for transporting guns, not only over seas, but over land as well. How often had I watched the gunnery competition at the Royal Tournament, as the Marines had dismantled guns, dragged them over obstacles, and reassembled them in amazingly fast times. And how often I had read

in the programme about this competition had stemmed from their need, in the past, to transport guns from a ship to a battle ground inland.

As a quarter master, Samuel Witheridge would have been responsible for supplies, so it was not surprising that, with his gunnery training as well, he should have been selected to be part of a group carrying guns and food supplies for the soldiers being sent to subdue the Boers. How many of the *Boadicea*'s crew were involved in this ill fated venture?

This meagre information spurred me on to find out more about Samuel. Had he and Mary Ann had any children, and if so, what became of them, and indeed of Mary Ann herself. From her marriage certificate and her age in 1881, it seems likely that she was born in 1854. There are three entries in the death indexes, any one of which might possibly relate to her. A Mary Ann died in Tavistock aged 46, another died in Plymouth in 1920, aged 60, and a third died in Hackney in 1923, aged 64. However, Mary Ann was a young widow and could well have remarried. The GRO indexes show the marriage of a Mary Ann Witheridge in 1883 in Stoke Damerel. Samuel's widow would have been only 29, so was this her? There is still a lot of searching to be done.

There is also more searching to be done on Samuel's sister, Elizabeth Jane, and her husband Henry Miller. The 1881 census shows that they had a daughter, Ethel, aged one, presumably born in 1879. (For those who think my arithmetic is adrift, I should point out that censuses were always taken in the early part of the year, usually between February and April. It is therefore reasonable to assume that most people would not yet have had their birthday, and were due to notch up another year in the following months.) Henry Miller, aged 24, was a milkman, and Elizabeth Jane is entered as 'milkman's wife'.

I now need to find out where they were in 1891, and whether they had any more children. I know that Henry, at least, was still living in 1891, as he was still alive as late as October 1910, when he would have been 55. Yes, Auntie Dossie was right again, for the *Surrey Comet* records Henry Miller as one of the mourners at the funeral in Kingston of Edmund Witheridge, and Edmund's will names him as an executor!

I also need to try and find out what happened to Samuel's other brother, Thomas Henry Witheridge. I managed to check some of the indexes for the name Thomas Henry Garry, in case, at his marriage, he had been forced to use the name on his birth certificate. Again, I have so far found nothing. Did he emigrate, or did he also go to sea, and perhaps perish? Not knowing whether he went through life as a Witheridge or a Garry makes the research more difficult, but I don't intend to give up on any of these lines of research until I know the full truth about Samuel John Witheridge and his siblings.

Some of the truth about Samuel will come from researching the British campaigns of 1880 and 1881 in South Africa, and how exactly the sailors from the *Boadicea* came to be involved. Part 2 of this article, in the next *Witheridge Times*, will continue the story.

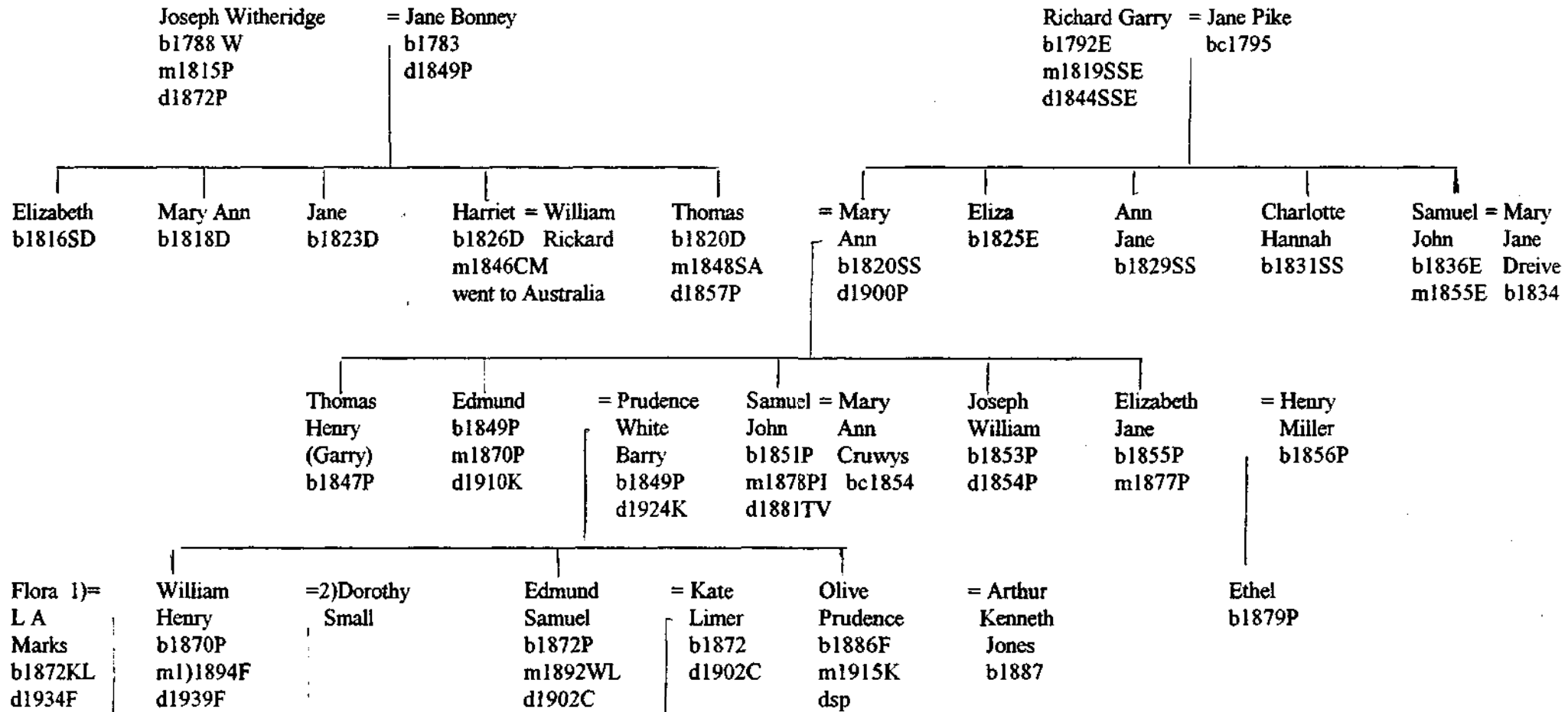
## TAILPIECE

(Some soldiers are luckier than others)

Prince Charles recently visited an Army Camp in Suffolk. The report in the *East Anglian Daily Times* read: "He met members of 3 Regiment which has returned from a peach-keeping role in Bosnia".



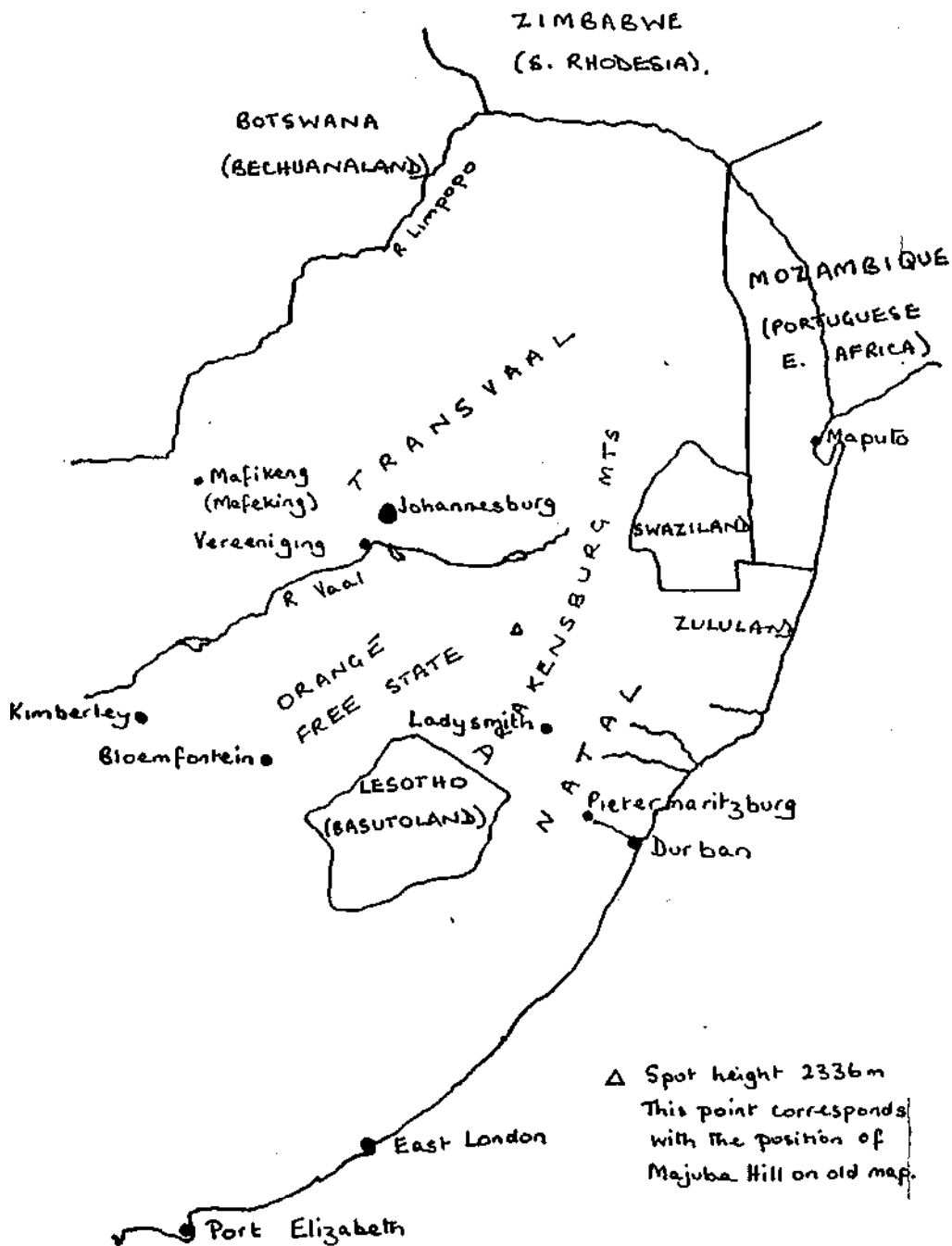
THE FAMILY OF SAMUEL JOHN WITHERIDGE. RM. KILLED IN ACTION AT MAJUBA HILL



KEY

C	= Claygate, Surrey	PI	= Portsea Island, Portsmouth
CM	= Charles the Martyr Plymouth	SA	= St Andrew, Plymouth
D	= Devonport, Plymouth	SD	= Stoke Damerel, Plymouth
E	= Exeter, Devon	SS	= St Sidwell, Exeter
F	= Fulham, London	TV	= Transvaal, S Africa
K	= Kingston, Surrey	W	= Wembury, Devon
KL	= Kensington, London	WL	= Wandsworth, London
P	= Plymouth, Devon		

Compiled by Kim Cook, April 1998, from information obtained to date



△ Spot height 2336m  
 This point corresponds  
 with the position of  
 Majuba Hill on old map.

SOUTH AFRICA

**OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY** - continued from front cover

Representative Australia	Mrs. Dorothy Witheridge, 95, Vimiera Road, Eastwood, NSW. Australia 2122
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**PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE SOCIETY SHOULD BE  
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