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The magazine of  
**The Wetheridge  
Family History Society**

Volume 21 Number 2

Summer 2007

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*Please submit all items for publication in The Witheridge Times to the Editor and Publisher*

*continued on inside back cover*

The logo shown on the front cover represents the boundaries of the County of Devon. The small black circles represent the Town of Witheridge and the Manor of Witheridge. Both are listed in the Domesday Book.

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**Visit the Witheridge Family History Society website:**

<http://www.WitheridgeFHS.com>

*Remember that you can download a full-colour version of this magazine from the Members Only area of the website.*

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# Editorial

This edition of *The Witheridge Times* is primarily a commemorative issue, celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the *Witheridge Family History Society*.

I had intended to include other material, but in the end, I had no room for it. This was mainly because of the number of pictures of the reunions in Australia and the UK, together with additional photos from New Zealand. For a while, I agonised over the amount of space I was devoting to these pictures, but in the end, I was unwilling to sacrifice any of them—I'm only sorry I did not have room for more pictures of members and reunion events and that we cannot afford to publish in colour. The memories of the times and events shared with dear friends in the Society are precious and deserve to be documented. Our today is tomorrow's history.

So, once again, I must apologise that some articles have been held over to the next issue. However, I have to add that reunion photos may well feature prominently in the next issue as well! This is because Kathy and Paul Witheridge, from Canada (Kathy is the Society's North American representative) have organised some 'mini' reunions, which will take place at several North American locations later this year.

I also have a very pleasant duty to perform, which is to welcome two new members: Shirley and Derek Andrews, who joined the Society at the reunion meeting, where Derek spent a long time talking with Joyce Browne and trying to clarify his Witheridge ancestry. I look forward to seeing it documented in a future issue. Once again, Shirley and Derek, welcome to the *Witheridge Family History Society*.

It has been a very difficult issue to come to grips with, due to some events which have affected me, personally. This has meant that this issue has appeared later than I really would have liked. Nevertheless, it's now ready to go and, like all editors, I can heave a great sigh of relief!

## **Very sad news**

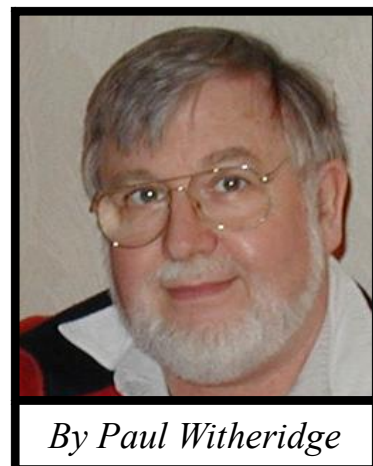
It is with great sadness that I have to report the passing of two members of our Society.

One was Graham Browne, a past chairman, committee member and a stalwart supporter of the *Witheridge Family History Society* for twenty years.

Graham passed away on 3 August 2007, after a long battle with cancer.

Joyce and Graham Browne were able to attend the Society's twentieth anniversary reunion, at Bovey Tracey, despite Graham being in considerable and constant pain—something he hid from the rest of us and also something you would find it difficult to guess from the reunion photos published later in this magazine.

I had only known Graham for a few years, but in that time I had come to respect and admire him. I wish I had had the privilege of knowing him for much longer.



*By Paul Witheridge*

Joyce Browne has asked me to say how much she valued the tremendous support that she received from members of the Society. She said that it was just like family and that it showed how much of a *family* society we are.

The other member was my father, Ray Witheridge, who passed away on 7 June 2007, after a short illness. Dad had been all set to attend the anniversary reunion, which would have been his first ever—we even had a special anniversary certificate prepared to award to him as the oldest attendee. However, he was hospitalised a couple of weeks before the reunion and, despite early signs of making a good recovery, gradually weakened and eventually succumbed to pneumonia, two-and-a-half weeks after the reunion.

I really wish he could have made it to that reunion. He would have enjoyed it and, as we subsequently discovered, would have met up with another member, Derek Glynn, who had served in the same RAF squadron, *35 Squadron*. They would have had a great time.

We will publish full obituaries in the next issue.

## In memoriam



*Graham Browne*

*14 June 1924 – 3 August 2007*



*Raymond Arthur Edwin Witheridge*

*26 February 1920 – 7 June 2007*

# Report from the 2007 Annual General Meeting

The Society's Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on the morning of the first day of the annual *Witheridge Family History Society* reunion—in this case the special *Twentieth Anniversary Reunion*—on Saturday 19 May, at the Coombe Cross Hotel, Bovey Tracey, South Devon.

## **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting**

### **1. Opening and welcome**

The meeting was opened at 9:50 a.m. by the Chairman, Ron Dixon, who welcomed everyone to the Twentieth Anniversary Witheridge Reunion and to the AGM. Ron said that he had sent greeting e-mails to Australia, New Zealand and North America, wishing them well and a happy twentieth anniversary. He then asked the Vice-chairman, Paul Witheridge, to read out greetings received from Rev David Witheridge (from North America) and from Judith and Allan Witheridge (our Australian representatives). These greetings are reproduced below (see pages 36 and 41).

**Present:** Joyce and Graham Browne, Kim and Roy Cook, Brenda and Ron Dixon, Barbara and Terry Finemore, Anne Geddes-Atwell, Pamela and Derek Glynn, Lorna Home, Beryl and Paul Witheridge (UK), Jenny, Mark and James Witheridge, June and David Witheridge, Kathy and Paul Witheridge (Canada), Maureen and Richard Witheridge, and Sue Witheridge.

### **2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from: Zoe and Jason Cook, David Torborg and Jim Witheridge, Christopher Witheridge, Rev David Witheridge, Ray Witheridge, and Rod and Sue Witheridge.

### **3. Minutes of the AGM held at Porlock on 20 May 2006**

These minutes were accepted as read.

### **4. Matters arising from the minutes of the 2006 AGM**

There were no matters arising.

### **5. Officers' reports**

Reports from the following officers were distributed, before the meeting, for attendees to read: Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Research Coordinator, Editor, and Webmaster reports. The text of these reports can be found following these minutes. There were no matters arising from the reports.

### **6. 2007 Anniversary meeting coordinator's report**

Richard Witheridge's report was distributed to attendees before the meeting. The text of his report can be found following these minutes. There were no matters arising from the report.

## 7. Reports from overseas

The report from the North American Representative, Kathy Witheridge, was distributed for attendees to read before the meeting. News from Australia was read out at the beginning of the AGM. There were no matters arising from either of these reports. Both can be found below (see pages 18 and 41).

Paul Witheridge (Canada) said that he would like to have seen a report from New Zealand and all members at the AGM agreed it would be nice to hear news about members in New Zealand and what research is going on there. Sue Witheridge undertook to investigate this.

## 8. Election of officers and committee members

The following were elected unopposed:

<i>Chairman</i>	Richard Witheridge
<i>Vice-chairman</i>	Paul Witheridge (UK)
<i>Secretary</i>	Beryl Witheridge
<i>Treasurer</i>	Beryl Witheridge
<i>Assistant Treasurer</i>	Paul Witheridge (UK)
<i>Membership Secretary</i>	Paul Witheridge (UK)
<i>Research Coordinator</i>	Kim Cook
<i>Editor</i>	Paul Witheridge (UK)
<i>Assistant Editor</i>	Kim Cook
<i>Webmaster</i>	Paul Witheridge (Canada)
<i>Committee members</i>	Roy Cook, Maureen Witheridge and Pamela Glynn

The outgoing Chairman, Ron Dixon, then ceremoniously handed over the gavel to the new Chairman, Richard Witheridge, who was greeted by a hearty round of applause.

*The outgoing Chairman, Ron Dixon (on the right), passes the gavel to the new Chairman, Richard Witheridge*



## 9. Overseas representatives

All overseas representatives—Judith and Allan for Australia, Velma Metcalfe for New Zealand and Kathy Witheridge for North America—had agreed to continue in their roles. A round of applause was given and the meeting passed a unanimous vote of thanks to them, for their ongoing efforts.

## 10. Overhaul of the Society's constitution

This resolution, amending the constitution, was passed unanimously and a vote of thanks was given to all those who had worked on the amendments.

However, there was considerable discussion about the way in which the committee intended to interpret paragraph 5.5 of the new constitution. This gives the committee the authority to waive part, or all, of a membership subscription in 'exceptional circumstances'.

The discussion revolved around the way the committee should implement a change to UK subscriptions, introduced by the amendment to the constitution. Previously there have been *three* subscription rates available to UK members: *full membership*, *family membership* and *economy membership*. From now on, there will be a *one* subscription rate for all UK members, bringing them into line with overseas members (the current UK subscription rate is now set at £10 per annum, and the overseas rate, at £12). This will be the first change in subscription rates since the Society was founded in 1987 and, while the rate of £10 is not expected to cause problems for any UK member currently paying a lower rate, the committee intended to use the authority of paragraph 5.5 to waive the increases for existing members for the time being, giving more time to assess the impact. The first subscription change for twenty years was viewed as an 'exceptional circumstance' and so paragraph 5.5 could be applied.

However, Paul Witheridge (Canada) argued that the *only* interpretation of 'exceptional circumstances' should be financial hardship and that the committee should not use paragraph 5.5 to defer any subscription increases except in the case of such financial hardship.

Sue Witheridge (who comes originally from New Zealand but is currently living in the UK) pointed out that, due to the current exchange rate, a £12 subscription in New Zealand is equivalent to paying £30 in the UK. She had direct evidence that New Zealand members had given up their membership because of the cost. This news came as somewhat of a shock to the entire meeting!

In the end, the meeting decided to ask the committee to review the implementation of changes to UK subscriptions and to consider problems caused by currency disparities.

## 11. Venue for the 2008 reunion

The 2008 WFHS Reunion will be held in Kent on Saturday and Sunday 17–18 May. The exact venue is yet to be chosen, but will be in the Tenterden/Ashford vicinity.

Two choices were offered for a Sunday activity: a visit to the Chatham Dockyard (with Witheridge connections) or a treasure hunt in the Ashford area (to be run in conjunction with another enthusiast group). A vote was taken and the treasure hunt option won by a small majority.



Kim Cook proposed that the family history content be supported by a talk on the Saturday afternoon about the Witheridges of Chatham.

Kim and Roy Cook, and Brenda and Ron Dixon agreed to find a venue for the AGM and research suitable accommodation in the area.

## 12. Any other business

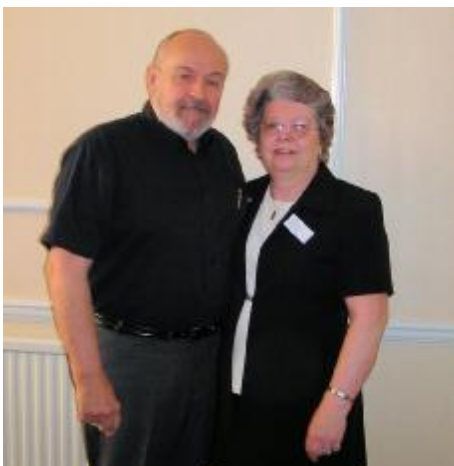
Certificates were presented to Ron Dixon, for his services as chairman; Richard Witheridge, for his hard work in arranging the Twentieth Anniversary Reunion; Kathy Witheridge, who was made an Honorary Life Vice-president for all her past services to Witheridge family history; and to Kim Cook, our founder twenty years ago. Finally, all attendees were presented with certificates of attendance at this special anniversary reunion. James Witheridge received a special certificate (as the youngest Witheridge present), as did Kathy and Paul Witheridge (for travelling from Canada to attend so many reunions over the past twenty years).

**Note:** all the certificates were made possible by an anonymous donation, with the condition that they should remain a secret until the moment of presentation.

The meeting was closed by the Chairman, Richard Witheridge, at 11.15 a.m., thanking everyone for their attendance and wishing everyone an enjoyable weekend.

*James Witheridge displays his special certificate for being the youngest attendee, watched by his proud grandfather*







*By Ron Dixon*

## **Chairman's report**

This is my third and final year as the Chairman of the Society and, as only an 'add-on' member of the *Witheridge Family History Society*, I am delighted at how I have been received.

This year is the twentieth anniversary of the Society and to look back over the years, it is wonderful to see how the Society has grown and developed into what we know today. No doubt many other families would be proud to be in such a position as the Witheridges.

It is also pleasing to see that there are such strong contacts with the overseas members, with visits being made both ways between countries for holidays, anniversaries and meetings. Notwithstanding this, the friendships that have grown over the years between members, families and friends go without saying.

On the home front, the developments that have been undertaken during the year are many, as can be seen via the new style, high tech, modern, buzz-words etc, that come from the computer age committee members (except me)—fantastic! Further information will no doubt be available at the AGM via the agenda items and committee reports.

Apart from the continuous correspondence, phone calls, e-mails and face-to-face meetings between committee members during the year, there were also two full-day committee meetings. These were hosted by Beryl Witheridge and Brenda Dixon, respectively, for which we were all very grateful, not just for the accommodation, but for the amount of food consumed—too many calories!

I have said before that the Chairman's lot is a happy one, with all the hard work being done by the other committee members, and I'm sure that I carry the support of all the members in saying a big 'thank you' for all their efforts over the years.

I shall be pleased to pass on the Chairmanship to my successor with the knowledge that new ideas and direction will follow. I also hope that other members of the Society will come forward to join the committee and help to plan for the future.

### ***Members arriving for the reunion (see facing page)***

*1st row: Joyce and Graham Browne, Kim and Roy Cook, Brenda and Ron Dixon*

*2nd row: Anne Geddes-Atwell, Barbara and Terry Finemore, Pamela and Derek Glynn*

*3rd row: Lorna Home, Beryl and Paul Witheridge, Mark, Jenny and James Witheridge*

*4th row: Kathy and Paul Witheridge, Maureen and Richard Witheridge, Sue Witheridge*

## **Treasurer's report**

I am relieved to report that my first year-end financial statement (see facing page) of the Society's accounts went to our auditor, Ron Dixon, and came back without a hitch.

Compared to previous year-end figures, this year, we have an all-time high closing balance of £1,714.29. This is very good, especially as this year's reunion will be very costly.

The main reasons for our healthy account are:

- Many members paying advance subscriptions for three years and, in some cases, four years.
- Subscriptions were paid promptly (almost all came into this financial year).
- There was over £100 of late subscriptions from the previous year included in this year's income (making last year's closing balance look worse than it should, compared to this year's).
- Last year's Reunion costs were much lighter than usual, with morning and afternoon refreshments donated and no Society contribution to any lunch costs.
- The research budget was not spent.
- The postage for the Christmas cards was donated.
- Officers did not charge for sundry expenses (e.g. postage, printing, paper).
- There was an anonymous donation towards reunion costs.

The current state of the bank balance must *not* fool us. Apart from the high cost of this Anniversary Reunion, the magazine printing and distribution costs have increased substantially and we face new expenses for sending Christmas cards and to comply with the UK Data Protection Act. Unless we are very careful, our healthy balance will evaporate. This is something the committee *must* address urgently in the coming year.



*By Beryl Witheridge*

### **Good news**

Although we expected the twentieth anniversary reunion to cost the Society an arm and a leg, after the dust has settled, the treasurer can now ungrit her teeth because the net costs have turned out to be only about £1 more than the 2006 reunion, which was itself a bargain at only £37.

This is mostly due to the phenomenal success of the sale of items at the reunion and afterwards, plus some cash donations from members.

A really big **thank you** is due to all those who contributed items for sale, prizes for the raffle, or actual cash.

# Wetheridge Family History Society

## Income and Expenditure for Year-ending 20 April 2007

**Balance brought forward from March Statement 2006 No. 225** £1,297.92

### Income

Membership Subscriptions	£ 743.24
Donations	£ 63.68
Sale of magazines	£ 14.32
PayPal verification	£ 0.15
<b>Total income for year-ending 20 April 2007</b>	<b>£ 821.39</b>

### Expenditure

Printing of Magazine Vol 20 No 1	£ 52.88
Distribution of Magazine Vol 20 No 1	£ 39.04
Printing & Distribution of Magazine Vol 20 No 2	£ 109.31
Printing & Distribution of Magazine Vol 20 No 3	£ 109.31
Payment Porlock Village Hall (AGM May 2006)	£ 27.00
Subscription to Guild-of One-Name-Studies (GoONS) for 2007	£ 12.00
Subscription to Federation of Family History Society (FFHS) for 2007	£ 30.00
Christmas cards, postage and newspapers	£ 25.48
<b>Total expenditure for year-ending 20 April 2007</b>	<b>£ 405.02</b>

**Final Balance as of April Statement 2007 No. 237** £1,714.29

We, the undersigned, believe the above to be an accurate statement of the current financial standing for the Wetheridge Family History Society.



**B M Witheridge**  
Treasurer  
Dated: 26-04-2007



**P R Witheridge**  
Assistant Treasurer  
Dated: 26-04-2007



**R Dixon**  
Auditor  
Dated: 30-04-2007

## Secretary's report

This is my second year as the *Witheridge Family History Society's* secretary. It has been a busy one, especially with all the preparations for this very special Reunion; the committee have all worked hard to make it one to remember. Hopefully, I will be able to give you a full account of what took place in the next issue of *The Witheridge Times*. Keep your eyes peeled! [*That means this issue – Ed.*]

One of my objectives for this year was to compile a *WFHS Recipe Book*. This has now been completed and will be on sale at the Reunion for just £5.00. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my husband, Paul, for all his help; without his computer expertise, patience and willingness to eat my photographic models, I doubt there would be any recipe book.

Another objective was to put together a photo album of all our members. I asked many members to send me their photos—*thank you* to all those that did. I must also thank Maureen and Richard, who took photos at past reunions and have kindly given me copies for the album. The album will be on display at this reunion. However, I do not yet have photos of everyone and I would still love to have one of you all. So, if you haven't done so yet, please send me your photo, either by post or as a digital copy via e-mail.

Members of *The Witheridge Family History Society* are spread all around the world and most cannot attend our Reunions or the Society's Annual General Meeting. Even committee members find it difficult to attend meetings in person. We are trying to make use of modern technology—e-mail, phone calls via the Internet, and so on—to involve and inform our members as much as we can. As secretary, I try to make sure that our overseas representatives are aware, in advance, of the agenda for committee meetings and can input their opinions.

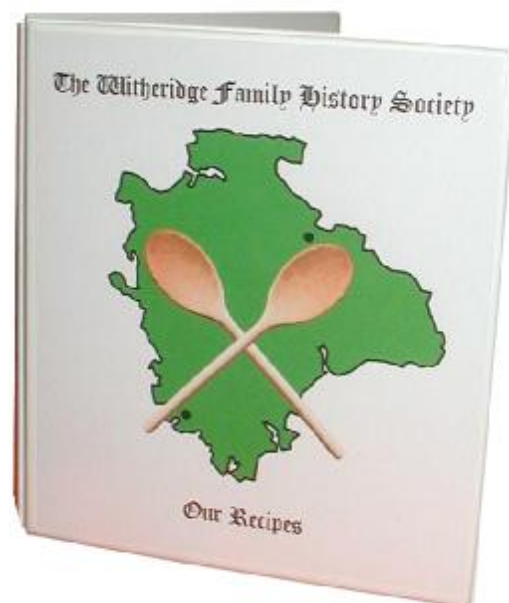
You will also find I have posted the full minutes of committee meetings plus the agenda for the AGM on the *Members Area* of the Society's website and, for the second year running, provided an absentee-voting facility, via the website, for those who cannot attend the AGM.

With regard to the UK Data Protection Act, after a careful evaluation, the committee decided that we are obliged to register to comply with UK law. This is primarily because, as genealogists, we store and *share* information about *living* persons who are *not* members of the Society. Registration is now in hand and the first registration fee will come out of the Society's budget for 2007–2008.

On a final note, I would like to thank everyone for their help, and wish you all a very good year and a very happy Twentieth Anniversary Reunion—wherever you may be.



By Beryl Witheridge



*The WFHS Recipe Book at £5.00*



By Paul Witheridge

## **Membership Secretary's report**

The Society continues to grow at a gentle rate. Three new members joined in May last year, another in November and two more in December. If you include the additional family members they brought with them, we added a grand total of *twenty* new Witheridge descendants to the Society! Sadly, we also lost one member, Eric Pover, who passed away in May 2006.

We also introduced a new way for members to pay their subscriptions, using the Internet and *PayPal*. It's aimed mainly at our overseas members, giving them a convenient way of paying in their own currency. It's much cheaper than buying a bank draft to pay in pounds sterling, which typically costs around £10—it only costs about £0.70 to pay a £12 subscription using PayPal. A total of £144 pounds was received via this route.

Subscription income was higher than normal this year, largely because we collected £129 in advance subscriptions for 2008, 2009 and even 2010—more members than usual paid advanced dues.

Finally, a big *thank you* goes to all those members who paid their subscriptions promptly, making my first year, as membership secretary, a lot easier.



By Kim Cook

## **Research Coordinator's report**

Once again, this report is more that of a researcher than of a coordinator, reflecting mainly the work I have done myself as, with the exception of Joyce Browne, no-one has advised me at the time of what they've been doing. If any of our members are doing research, please can they let me know, so that we can avoid the waste of duplication.

### **Enhanced Narrative Pedigrees**

Last year, I reported that I had started on a programme to ensure that the many and varied forms of records held by the Society are collated into a single format, so that they can be held by key members of the Society, and be readily available to answer members' queries. At last year's AGM, I brought *Enhanced Narrative Pedigrees* (ENPs) for seven Witheridge or Wetheridge families with me. This year I have added a further seven family groups to the list, although not all ENPs are yet complete in all lines of descent. The list of families for which we have full or partial ENPs is as follows:

- Australia—early settlers (2007)
- Bideford, Northam, etc—Causey Witheridges (2006)
- Bradworthy, Tavistock (2007)
- Bristol—Reuben Witheridge (2007)
- Buckland (2006)

Combe Martin and Berrynarbor (2007)  
 Ermington (2007)  
 Highgate, Camberwell—Wetheridge (2006)  
 Kent, London, Birmingham (2006)  
 Modbury (2007)  
 Newton Ferrers (2006)  
 South Hams (2006)  
 Thurlestone & South Milton (2006)  
 Wembury (2007)

During the year it became apparent that while we had updated most of our records, not all these updates had been published. One family whose records had not been updated in *The Witheridge Times* was that of Reuben Witheridge and his descendants. As I was already working on the ENP for this family, I was able to add new information from member Joy Allbrooke, and this ENP has now been published in *The Witheridge Times*. I am very grateful to Joy for the additional information she supplied.

### **Thanks to Joyce Browne**

Thanks are also due to Joyce Browne who, despite health difficulties, continues to follow specific lines of research. This year Joyce's enquiries have all come back negative, but this doesn't mean her efforts have been wasted, for negative results rule out wrong assumptions and serve to send us in other directions in our search for the truth. Thank you Joyce, for persevering with research, despite the many difficulties you and Graham have endured this year, and we trust that this will prove to be an easier year for you.

### **A Place in the Family**

As promised last year, I have been working on a book/booklet called 'A Place in the Family', looking at properties that bear the Witheridge name, and those in which we know Witheridges have lived for a considerable period of time.

Each property is dealt with under four headings: *The Location*, *The Property*, *The Witheridge Connection* and *More Recent History*. The properties now covered include:

<i>Location</i>	<i>Property</i>
East Ogwell, Devon	Witheridge Farm
Ermington, Devon	Strode Manor Farm
Exton, Somerset	Witheridge Farm
Fulham, London	Clovelly, New Kings Road
Newton Ferrers, Devon	Witheridge Cottage
Tavistock, Devon	Parswell Farm
Minneapolis, Minnesota	2425 Irving Avenue South

Photos of all these properties, including a number of interiors, will be included in the final publication. I am particularly grateful to Joyce Browne and Richard Witheridge for the information they have given me on Strode Manor Farm, and to Jim Witheridge and his father David for information on their former home in Minneapolis.



I have with me an A4 printout of the work so far, but to turn this into a worthwhile publication, more properties need to be covered. If any member knows of a property that either bears the Witheridge name, or in which Witheridges have lived for a substantial period (say fifty years or more), please let me know.

### **Witheridges Remembered**

I suspect that some of our members may have forgotten, and others may be unaware of, the *Witheridges Remembered* project. We are trying to compile a collection of pen portraits of earlier members of the various Witheridge families, whether from personal recollections, or stories handed down in the family.

We're aiming to provide information that official records can't supply—details of personalities, foibles and temperaments, with anecdotes and character insights. This year I have added a couple more profiles of people in my own family. I have the *Witheridges Remembered* file with me today, and I hope members will take the time to look at it, and be inspired to supply profiles of people in their own families, so that we may capture them and their personalities before the memories fade and are lost forever.

### **Other research**

As a result of other enquiries during the year, I have been able to resolve a couple of mysteries which have puzzled us for some years. I believe I have now established the identity and general family of Mary Ann Bussell, for many years the partner of George Causey Witheridge, even though it has not been possible to determine her exact parentage.

We had also been mystified by the parents of William James Witheridge, born in Plymouth in 1856. I have now traced the origins of his mother, Mary Ann Penrose. Her first husband was Richard Bounty, by whom she had a son, also Richard Bounty. She then had William James Witheridge, naming his father as William Witheridge, mariner, deceased. Finally, she married George Brent Taylor, by whom she had a further three children. Exhaustive searches for a marriage between Mary Ann and mariner William Witheridges have failed to find any records, so this source of information on William's parentage is denied us. Nor has a death certificate been found for William. However, having eliminated all other known Williams of the right age, I now believe that William was the son of John Witheridge and Mary Han(d)cock of Combmartin. In the 1851 census he was listed as a seaman, but there is no record of him after that date. It is possible that William had planned to marry the widowed Mary Ann Bounty, but either died at sea before their son was born, or settled overseas, perhaps unaware that Mary Ann was carrying his son.

### **Witheridge links with Bovey Tracey**

Finally, in view of our reunion venue this year, I have been exploring possible links between the Witheridges and Bovey Tracey. The closest link so far discovered is the marriage of Edward Witheridge, born in 1849 in Halwell, to Emma Isabella Cross, whose father, William Cross, was baptised on 6 February 1820 in Bovey Tracey. Coincidentally, in 1881 William Cross and his wife, Prudence, were living in East Ogwell, not very far from Witheridge Farm. Edward Witheridge was the brother of James Witheridge, great-grandfather of Paul Witheridge of Marlow.

Sadly, I have so far been able to trace any descendants of Edward Witheridge and Emma Isabella Cross. Their daughter, Emily Louisa Witheridge, born 1874, married Frederick Thomas A Gilpin, but died at the age of twenty-four, possibly in childbirth. Son, William Edward Witheridge, born 1873, died in 1874, and daughter, Ellen Elizabeth Witheridge, born qv 1875, died in 1894, aged eighteen, and was buried on 8 March 1894 in Wolborough, Newton Abbot. However, if anyone has information indicating that there were descendants of Edward and Emma, I would be delighted to hear it.

## ***Editor's report***

There is a very graphic American saying, that I recall hearing at a conference I attended in San Francisco, more years ago than I like to remember:

*When you're up to your ass in alligators, you forget that your original intention was to drain the swamp!*

Well, I have been up to my 'ass' in scanning back issues of *The Witheridge Times* to create an archive that can be read and searched by computer!

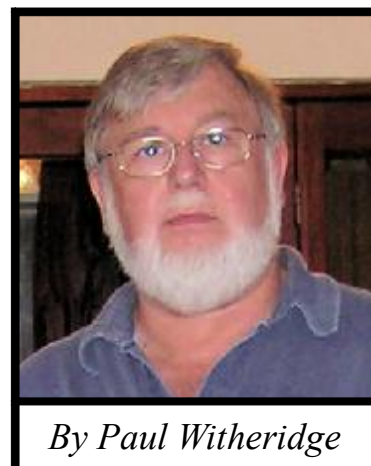
Having seen much of my own family's history vanish, when houses were cleared and possessions destroyed after the death of the owner, I am now passionate about preserving information for future generations. Creating this computerised archive is one of the actions I *can* take.

However, when you consider that to scan, process, check and proof-read one issue could, in the worst case, take over six hours, you can guess why the alligators nearly won! Thankfully, it's now done and CDROMs have been 'burned' (see right) ready for the Reunion. I could not have done it without Beryl, who helped all along the way, keeping those hungry alligators at bay!

You probably know that we (Beryl and I) have been members of the Society for only three and a bit years. So, for me, archiving all those back issues was also a journey into the Society's past—and a very humbling journey it was, as I worked my way through page after page of the documented results of so much patient and painstaking research. If I wore a hat, I would definitely take it off to all those past contributors.

The archiving was all about back issues, but I also need to address the production of new issues of our magazine. As editor, I am very well aware that most of our members are unable to travel to the Witheridge Reunions and that *The Witheridge Times* is one of the main links that joins us all together. For that reason, I am very glad the committee has decided we should continue to publish the magazine with an increased number of pages.

However, as editor, I am also well aware of the need to fill those pages! In the past year, we have done very well. Nevertheless, two facts continue to worry me. The first is that we rely



*By Paul Witheridge*



*The Magazine Archive  
CDROM at £4.50*

very heavily on a small number of contributors—primarily Joyce Browne, Kim Cook, Kathy Witheridge and Richard Witheridge, without whom the magazine would be thin indeed. The second fact is that, compared to earlier years, we are publishing less actual family history. So, *please*, all you members out there, consider if you could contribute an article to our magazine. Better still, become a regular contributor and, best of all, contribute some family history articles!

All those who have already contributed have my undying gratitude! Your efforts are *really* appreciated, both by me, as editor, and, I am sure, by everyone who reads the magazine. I also need to thank our Assistant Editor, Kim Cook, and my unofficial assistant editor, Beryl, who have saved me from some really crass errors.

Lastly, I have to report that costs continue to increase. The three issues produced in our previous financial year cost a total of £270, whereas the total for this last year was £310. We can chalk most of the increase up to more pages per issue and higher postal costs, with a minor contribution from increased unit print costs. In the coming year, it will be higher again (in fact, the first issue for 2007 cost £20 more than the last issue of 2006)!

## ***Webmaster's report***



*By Paul Witheridge  
(Canada)*

Since being elected (exposed?) as webmaster, I have experimented a bit. Several members had asked for a facelift (for the website) and I wanted to expand my own experience with web coding so there was a 'fit'. My overall aim was to avoid or at least minimize scripting as I rarely allow it in my own browsing. I've managed to do that with the home page and yet still provide for some dynamic and unlimited branching to 'departments' which may be useful to the membership. At the moment there are far more 'branches' than we need. The purpose of the facetious examples you see there was only to stimulate thought for the potential they may hold. I've pleaded for input as to what folders/headings the 'finished product' should contain and for 'content' to fill those. Some scripting has still been used for the photo slide shows as I haven't yet discovered a 'non-scripted' method. Suggestions are welcomed!

Some concerns have been expressed regarding the sensitivity of information that we might make available and I am most sympathetic to those concerns. We are committed to protecting members' personal data and to providing value to paid members. In this aim, Paul (UK) has kindly provided a Members Only page providing a secure log-in to obtain copies of the Witheridge Times magazine and with the potential for protected access to other documents in future.

At present, what we really need is your input! What do you want to see on the site? Can you help by providing titles and content for those 'departments' that currently exist only as cheeky placeholders? Committee approval is required for all content so feel free to submit your ideas to me or to any Committee Member.

## **North American Representative's report**

Once again we have gone another year with *The Witheridge Family History Society* and it's time for another AGM.

I have worked on the North American members over the past year, mainly trying to get them to attend our Twentieth Anniversary. I started off quite well, but, over the months, most have decided against. Unfortunately, there are only three of us left attending. Paul and I will be there, as usual, and this year we have a very special new member, *Anne Geddes-Atwell*. Anne is our only member from the descendants of a daughter of George Witheridge and Mary Saunders, who emigrated to Canada in 1841. Mary Jane Witheridge was their first child born in Canada, on 31 January 1842. I had the most trouble trying to locate family of Mary Jane, and after many years of searching, Anne reached me. Anne has lots of information on this line of the Bradworthy family.

I would like to welcome Anne to our Twentieth Anniversary and do hope that she has a wonderful time. I am sure that she will enjoy visiting Bradworthy, where her family originated.

I haven't done too much North American research this year, but I still like to work on British lines. This year I worked on the Witheridge Family of the Barnstaple area. There is information available on the research table.

I am very happy to serve another year as the North American Representative.

## **2007 Reunion Coordinator's report**

At an earlier meeting it was suggested that the reunion should be held in Devon, where all the families originated. It was reasoned that I was the nearest, living at Dunster in Somerset, so I accepted the task. (I had also organised the 1997 Reunion.)

To get this project underway the committee has had two extra meetings, one at Marlow, hosted by Beryl and Paul, and one at Orpington, hosted by Brenda and Ron. Thanks to all of them for the use of their homes and for the wonderful meals laid on for us.

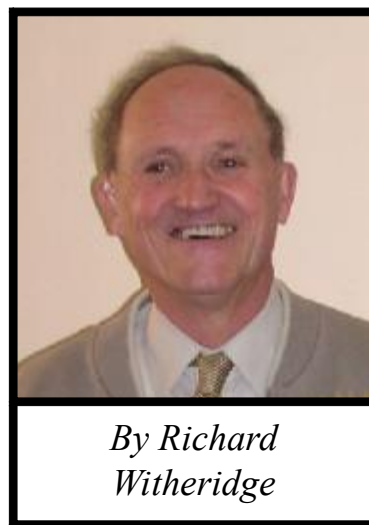
Following Beryl and Paul's visit to Bovey Tracey and their stay in the Coombe Cross Hotel, reported in the magazine, Maureen and I visited Devon during 9–13 May 2006 and took the opportunity to visit the hotel, which we found to be excellent, as Paul and Beryl had already described.

The Manager took us all over the hotel and showed us the rooms and the swimming pool. He stated that, for Saturday, they could supply us with tea and coffee, a.m. and p.m., and a buffet meal at lunchtime. He also gave me the name and telephone number of a coach operator in the area.

I spoke to him (coach operator) on the phone and told him what was being planned and agreed



*By Kathy Witheridge*



*By Richard Witheridge*

to make contact again when we knew more details of our trip and likely numbers coming. He later agreed to make a provisional booking (which we could cancel up to a few weeks before the trip without costs) and also gave me travel times, so that I could work out how long we could stay at each location.

Whilst travelling home from Barnstaple, Maureen and I travelled to Combe Martin and made contact with the manager of the Pack of Cards public house, which is situated within five minutes walk from the church. They have stated that they can supply us with snack lunches on Sunday and have a separate room we can use. They also have a parking space for our coach. I have been in contact with the vicar at Combe Martin, Rev Keith Wyer, and he has agreed to keep the church open for us. Rev Wyer was the incumbent in 1997 and well remembers our previous visit.

At Bradworthy, I have been advised that there is a museum (with a Cecil Collacott room) and this will be opened by Daphne Nichols. The vicar, Rev Dorrington, has said the church will be open and he will try to arrange tea and coffee for us. Books on Bradworthy are currently out of stock, but Daphne will search to see if there are any available, for those interested. (Cecil Collacott was a local historian, whom we met in 1997, but who has since died. He helped to write the books.)

Whilst in Devon, we visited Sheila and Tom Jewell, who are members of the *Devon Family History* group and also honorary members of *The Witheridge Family History Society*. They have agreed to give a talk on Saturday entitled 'Researchers' snippets'.

At Northam, it is hoped that copies of the Northam Births, Deaths and Marriages will be available, but I am having difficulty making any contact, possibly due to telephone number changing. I will continue to try to make contact with Northam and hope to achieve something before the reunion.

Many thanks to Paul and Beryl for their help on this reunion project.





*Many members brought craftwork to display and, in one case, to sell for the Society's benefit. Here is just a sample of what was on show:*

*Top left:           découpage fashioned from nuts and cones, by Brenda Dixon*

*Top right:         painting by Maureen Witheridge*

*Bottom left:      flower arrangement, by Jenny Witheridge*

*Bottom right:    lavendar pouches, by Joyce Browne*



*Back row, standing, left to right: Roy Cook, Paul Witheridge (UK), Barbara Finemore, Paul Witheridge (Canada), June Witheridge, Terry Finemore, David Witheridge, Anne Geddes-Atwell, Richard Witheridge, Ron Dixon, Graham Browne, Liz Home, Mark Witheridge, Jenny Witheridge, James Witheridge and Derek Glynn*  
*Front row, sitting, left to right: Kim Cook, Beryl Witheridge, Brenda Dixon, Kathy Witheridge, Pamela Glynn, Joyce Browne, Lorna Home and Maureen Witheridge*

# Oh, What a Wonderful Wacky Witheridge Weekend! Memories of the 2007 Reunion

*With apologies to Joyce Browne for plagiarizing her use of W's.*

You probably wonder what on earth I am rabbiting on about!

Well, for those of you who have never read the editorial for the summer 1997 issue of *The Witheridge Times*, Joyce Browne, the then editor, wrote about the Society's tenth anniversary reunion and coined the phrase *Wonderful Witheridge Weekend*. She also wished she could add three more W's for *Wonderful Witheridge Weather*, but the tenth annual reunion weather was dreadful.

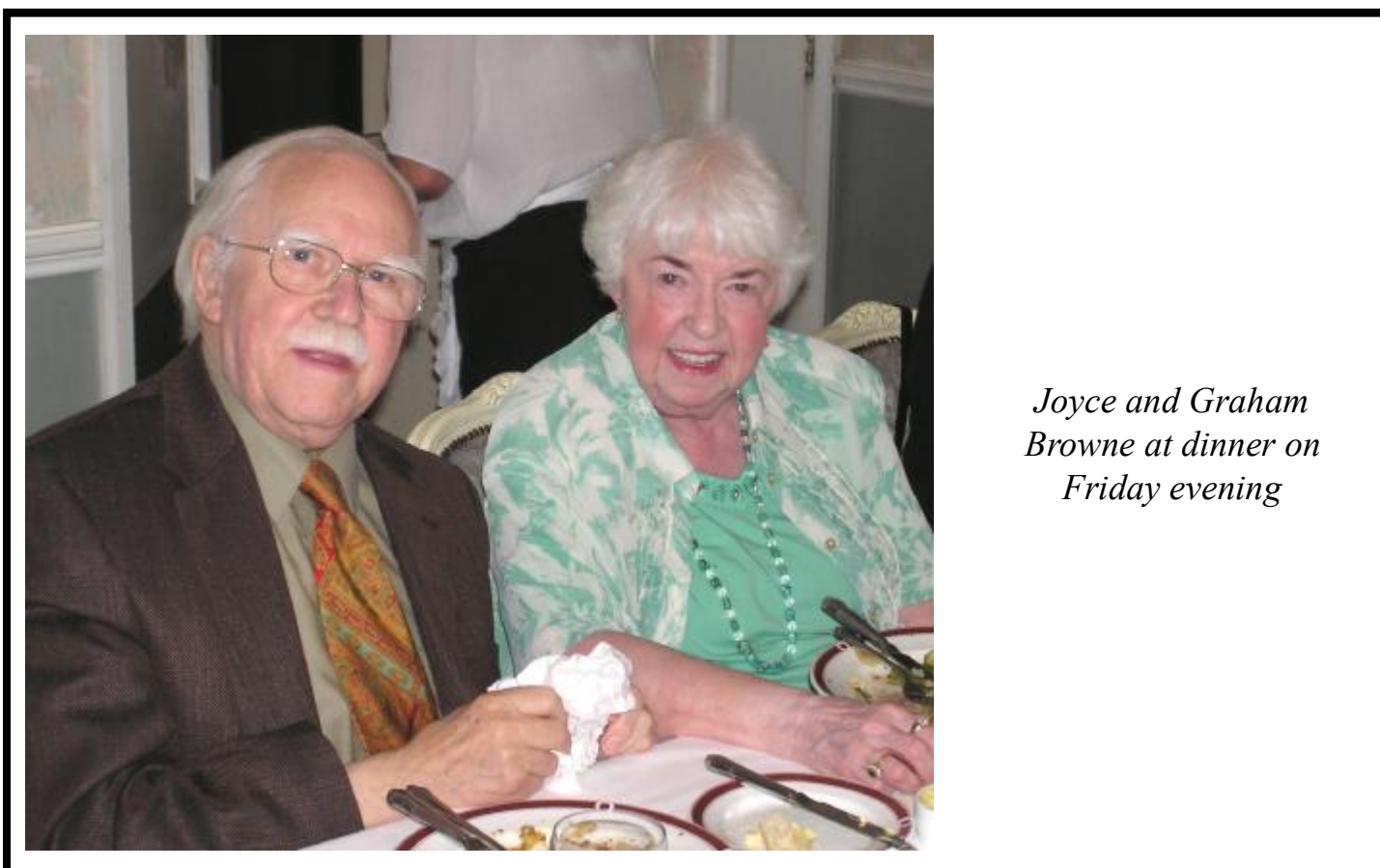
It seems that Joyce has a thing about reunion weather, because on our arrival, on Friday afternoon, she greeted us, saying we were in for a wet weekend! However, this time Joyce got it wrong. The weather was perfect; we had sunshine for the whole three days. A few clouds were seen, but not for long.

As promised in my report to the Annual General Meeting (see *Secretary's report* on page 12), here are my recollections of the *Witheridge Family History Society's* twentieth annual reunion.

Most attendees arrived at the Coombe Cross Hotel on Friday, 18 May 2007. We all met in the lounge for afternoon tea and tongues wagged non-stop, until it was time to choose our meal and migrate to the dining room.



*By Beryl Witheridge*



*Joyce and Graham  
Browne at dinner on  
Friday evening*



*For some of us, dessert  
can be the most  
important course of the  
meal*

*James Witheridge at  
dinner on Friday  
evening*



The hotel had set up the tables in a U-shape, so we could all dine together. The food was excellent and plentiful. Chatter and laughter flowed continuously throughout the evening, until we all, eventually, gave in and sought our beds.

Copies of the officers reports had been handed out during the course of afternoon and evening, so that members could read them in preparation for the meeting. However, I don't know how people actually managed to read them before the AGM—those that did must have been speed-readers. I never managed to read my copies, but then I did have the advantage of a preview while putting the package of reports together.

Breakfast was served promptly at eight o'clock the following morning, again at our U-shaped table, and once again we never stopped talking. What a family gathering it was; you would never have known that some of us are not actually related.

After breakfast we all met in the hotel's function room and set about laying out the displays of family history material and craftwork, ready for the afternoon, and setting up the room for the morning's AGM.

The craftwork displays were really very good (see page 20 for pictures of just a few of the items). We obviously have a lot of very talented Witheridges!

- Joyce Browne set out bookmarks and lavender bags, that she had made specifically to sell at the reunion.
- Maureen Witheridge set out a display of her stunning paintings.



*Kim Cook's 'famous' card index of Witheridge family history*

- Brenda Dixon brought an amazing display of découpage, made from seeds, nuts, fir cones and natural materials.
- Jenny Witheridge showed a beautiful flower arrangement, which was given to Joyce Browne at the end of the afternoon.
- Mark Witheridge exhibited a set of photos, including some impressive astronomical photos of the moon. His son, James, also brought photos showing his interests: model trains, a microlight aircraft and sunflowers.
- June Witheridge displayed some beautiful handmade quilts and a cushion.
- Kim Cook had brought along articles for sale from a company called *S&N*, who specialise in family history research material and archival storage. Kim also brought her famous (at least within the Society) card index so she could answer questions from members.
- Richard Witheridge had booklets for sale, which he had produced himself. They included: lists of Witheridge births, deaths and marriages, from 1837 onwards, taken from St Catherine's House records; a list of registration and census districts from 1837 to 1946; and a list of Witheridge births, marriages, deaths and other events, up to 1992, extracted from the Mormon International Genealogical Index (IGI). These represent a lot of work by Richard and are still available for purchase (see page 34 for more details).
- Lorna Home exhibited her book of poetry, *Inner Eye* (see page 44 for an extract from this book).
- Paul Witheridge (UK—Kathy Witheridge and I refer to the two Pauls as 'Paul the younger' and 'Paul the elder' and I leave you to guess which one is which) had for sale a searchable archive of all back issues of *The Witheridge Times* on a CDROM. After loading it onto your PC, you can search quickly through all the back issues for a particular word or phrase, making it an invaluable tool for research into Witheridge family history (if you want one, you can get one via [Editor@WitheridgeFHS.com](mailto:Editor@WitheridgeFHS.com) for just £4.50 plus postage—all proceeds to the Society).

- I, myself, had brought along the promised *Witheridge Family History Society Twentieth Anniversary Recipe Book*, as advertised in the previous issue of *The Witheridge Times*. It proved popular enough that it's now into its second printing—if you want a copy, it's available via [Secretary@WitheridgeFHS.com](mailto:Secretary@WitheridgeFHS.com) at £5.00 plus postage (again, all proceeds to the Society).

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) was supposed to start at 9:30 a.m., but a flock of chattering magpies has nothing on a function-roomful of Witheridges, gossiping at full bore! Ron Dixon, the chairman, eventually quietened everyone down, with liberal use of his gavel, and the meeting got underway at 9:50 a.m. Twenty-five members, in all, were present. The meeting went well and was very lively. I overheard comments of, 'it was one of the best AGMs we've had'—all thanks to Richard's planning. The meeting finished at 11:15 a.m.

By now, tea, coffee and biscuits had arrived and everyone milled around, discussing family history, looking at the displays, purchasing some of the items on sale, or just chatting some more. Brenda Dixon and Barbara Finemore went round selling raffle tickets. Brenda had organised the raffle and all prizes had been donated by members. The raffle raised £44 pounds, which, together with the proceeds from the sale of items, helped defray the reunion costs.

Just before lunch, four more attendees arrived.

Two of these were Sally and Colin Vosper. Colin is a third cousin to Kim Cook, Brenda Dixon and Sue Witheridge. He brought a very interesting exhibit, describing how a ship, the *SS Channel Queen*, captained by an ancestor of his, foundered on rocks off the coast of Guernsey, on Tuesday 1 February 1898. Captain Edward James Collings, the master of the *Channel Queen*, had earlier called for a lighthouse to be built to safeguard the passage past those very rocks.



The other two arrivals were Derek and Shirley Andrews, who joined the Society, there and then. They spent a long time talking with Joyce Browne about their family history and I suspect their heads must have been swimming with all the new information they picked up!

After a buffet lunch, Sheila and Tom Jewell gave a really interesting and amusing talk, titled *Researcher's Snippets* (see left). We all learnt something that afternoon. So, a big *thank you* to Sheila and Tom. [The material from this talk is available for download from the members only area of the Society's website at [www.WitheridgeFHS.com](http://www.WitheridgeFHS.com) – Ed.]



*Brenda Dixon, organiser of the raffle, wins one of the many prizes, in this case a book donated by Anne Geddes-Atwell*

The afternoon's organised events were now coming to an end and it was time for the cutting of the anniversary cake, by our founder, Kim Cook. The cake was made and donated by Brenda Dixon. What's more, by this time, everyone was dying for a cup of tea or coffee; we had all done so much talking and laughing that our jaws were aching and our tongues were parched.

It was also time to draw the raffle. There were ten prizes, in all, all donated by members.

It was now nearly time to change for the *formal anniversary dinner*. We all reconvened just before seven o'clock, in the lounge, all dressed up 'to the nines'. Someone said 'don't we scrub up well'. And we did. It just shows how proud we all are to be part of the Witheridge Family.

Chatter, laughter and camera flashes filled the dining room until about ten o'clock, when we all traipsed back to the function room for the group photograph, which was absolute chaos with several people trying to take

photos at the same time, some using self-timers to get everyone in the photo together, while others ran around oblivious to the camera counting down to the timed moment for the photo. I know the tears were running down my cheeks with laughter. We then retired to the lounge for coffee and then to bed. What a wonderful evening.



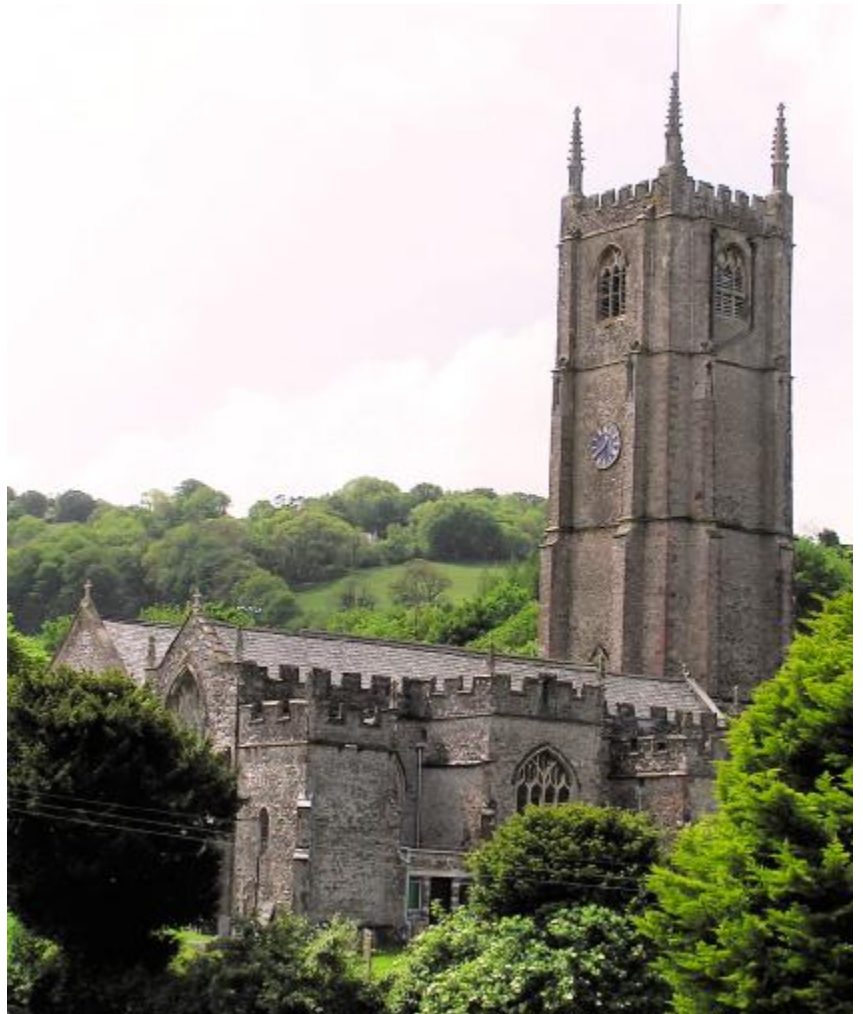
Sunday morning introduced another sunny day and, after breakfast, we got ready for what was to be a really wacky day.

We boarded a hired minibus that was to take us on a tour of Witheridge-related sites in north Devon. This was a bit like a scene from *The Keystone Cops*, with people getting on and off the bus, as they remembered forgotten items, and the bus backing in and out of the hotel driveway, to comply with other vehicles demands to be let out!

Our first destination was the parish church of *St Peter ad Vincula* in Combe Martin. We arrived at twelve o'clock and were welcomed by the vicar, who told us about the history of the church from the time of the Viking raiders through to the present day. The interior of the church displayed some magnificent ceilings, but most interesting were a carved oak screen and paintings of saints, both dating from early tudor times.

The next wacky thing was to go to the *Pack of Cards* pub, where we had a room reserved for lunch. We arrived at the pub, ordered and paid for our food, only to be informed that we would have to wait for anything up to an hour. The result was that some of us demanded our money back and went elsewhere!

We all met up again at the harbour wall, only to encounter Una Stock, the Society member who had greeted the Witheridges back in 1997, at the time of the tenth anniversary reunion. What a coincidence! Unfortunately, we could not spend long with Una, as we were now running late and Richard, our organiser, was urging us to get a move on.



*The parish church of St Peter ad Vincula at Combe Martin*



*Kim Cook, Sue Witheridge, Una Stock and Kathy Witheridge*



*St Margaret's Parish Church at Northam, with its colourful kneelers*

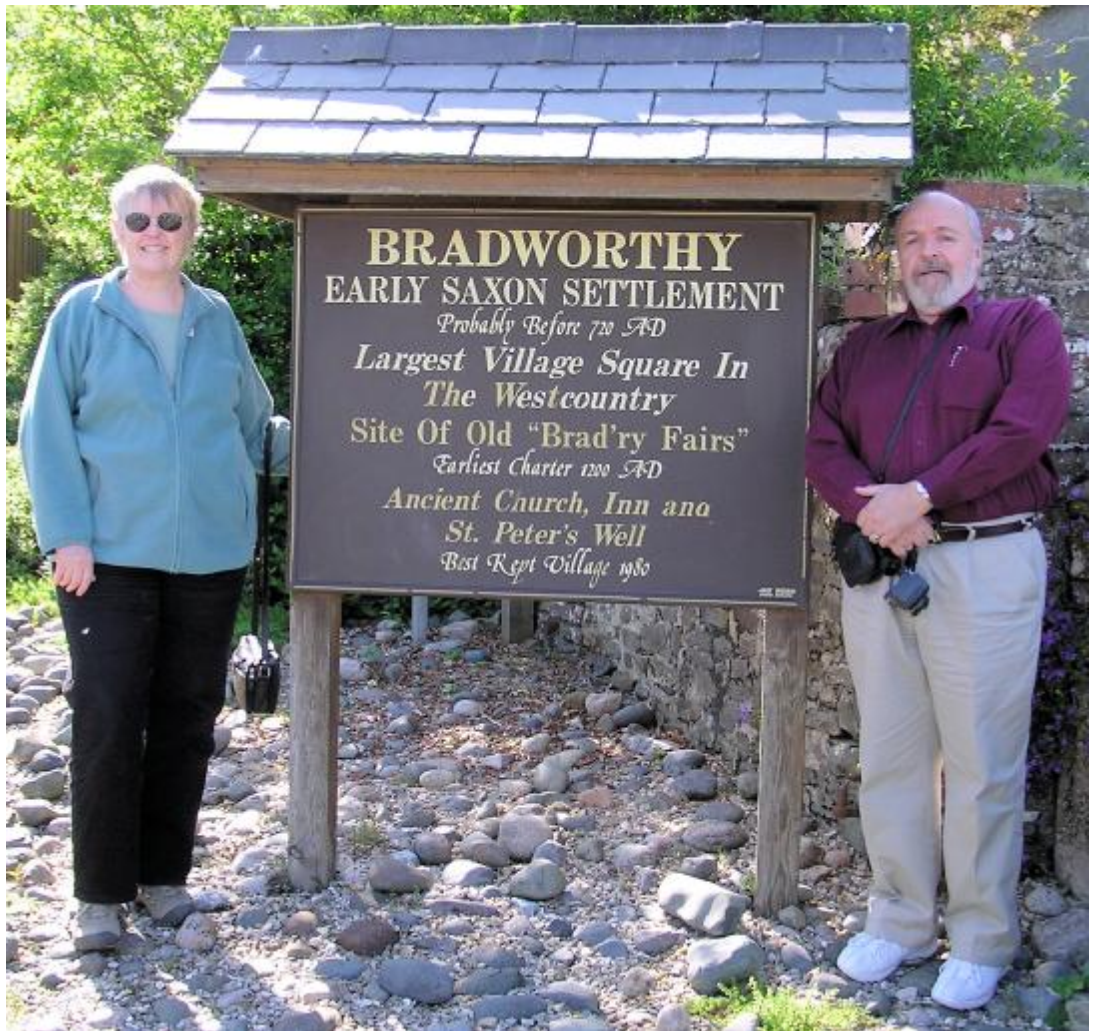
The next stop was Northam and its parish church. Both the Combe Martin and the Northam churches had the most colourful and decorative ceilings I have ever seen in ordinary parish churches, but the first thing that grabbed our attention was the pews with their colourful kneelers, one for every member of the congregation. *[If you download the full colour version of this issue, from the members-only area, you will see why the kneelers were so striking – Ed.]*

The second attention grabber was the sign for toilets, just behind the historic font (dating from the fourteenth century). At this point, biological necessity became paramount, but we still formed the usual, orderly, British queue, waiting patiently with only a hint of discomfort showing. By now we were running really late and Richard, our organiser, was tearing his hair out as he watched the occasional, slow forward shuffle of the line for the toilet.

Eventually we were off at the best speed the minibus could make, bouncing our way along country lanes to the final stop, Bradworthy. We were now over an hour late and when we did arrive, it was to find the vicar had given up waiting and the church was closed—not entirely our fault, after the debacle at the *Pack of Cards*, but bad enough to make everyone feel guilty!

However, we were able to walk around Bradworthy, observe the sign for the mysterious *Gnome Reserve* and photograph, *in situ*, the descendants of the Witheridges who emigrated from Bradworthy to North America. Also, the museum was still open, so we could still count the visit to Bradworthy as very successful.

*Anne Geddes-Atwell,  
from New York State,  
and Paul Witheridge,  
from Ontario, both  
descendants of the  
Witheridges who  
emigrated from  
Bradworthy to North  
America*



*and, what, on earth, is a  
Gnome Reserve?*

By 5.30 p.m., it was time to board our bumpy chariot again, for the journey back to the Coombe Cross Hotel, in south Devon, and, late as we were, we had to make a phone call to the hotel to delay dinner until 7.30 p.m.

It was the last group-dinner of the reunion and the following morning, after breakfast, people prepared to 'do their own thing': to return directly home, to carry out some personal family history research or perhaps sight seeing. Several of us gathered in the hotel garden for a 'farewell' photograph (see overleaf). Little did I know, at the time, how much of a *farewell* it was to be, for that was the last time saw Graham.

Afterwards, a small party—Anne Geddes-Atwell, Paul & Kathy Witheridge (from Canada), Paul and I—set off to Plymouth for the day. Anne wanted to visit the Devon Records Office and the nearest branch of this was at Plymouth, just thirty miles down the coast.

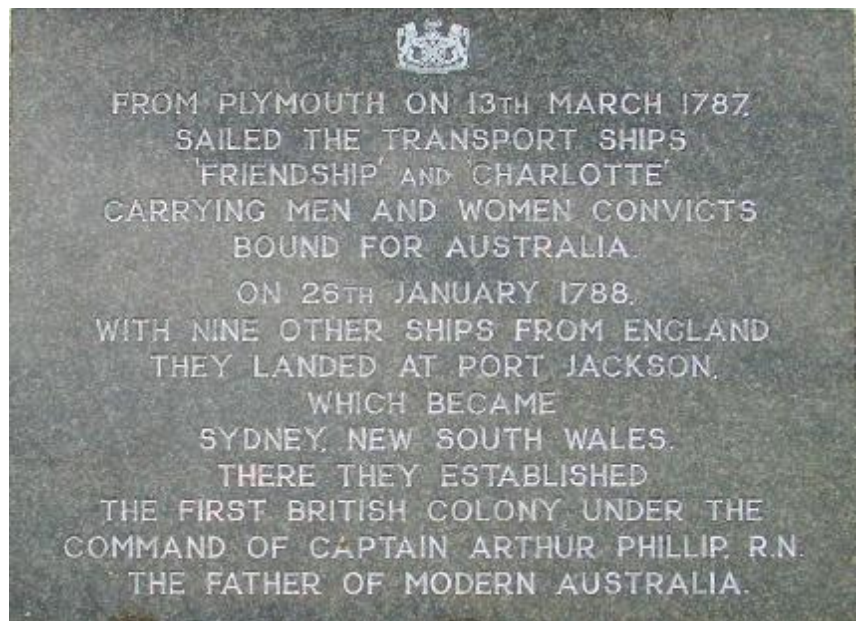


*Farewell to Bovey Tracey and the twentieth reunion*

*From left to right: Graham and Joyce Browne, Paul Witheridge (Canada), Brenda Dixon, Kathy Witheridge, Paul Witheridge (UK), Anne Geddes-Atwell, Ron Dixon, Lorna Home, Maureen and Richard Witheridge*

Unfortunately, on arrival, we found, to Anne's great disappointment, that the Records Office was closed on Mondays. Nevertheless, we knocked on the door, which was opened by a member of the staff, and I explained that Anne had come all the way from the USA, to research her family history, that she was only in Plymouth for that one day and was due to return to the USA the next day. Very obligingly, they let Anne in to do her research and the day was saved!

The rest of our party did some sight-seeing around Plymouth Harbour. We saw many plaques (*cont'd overleaf*)

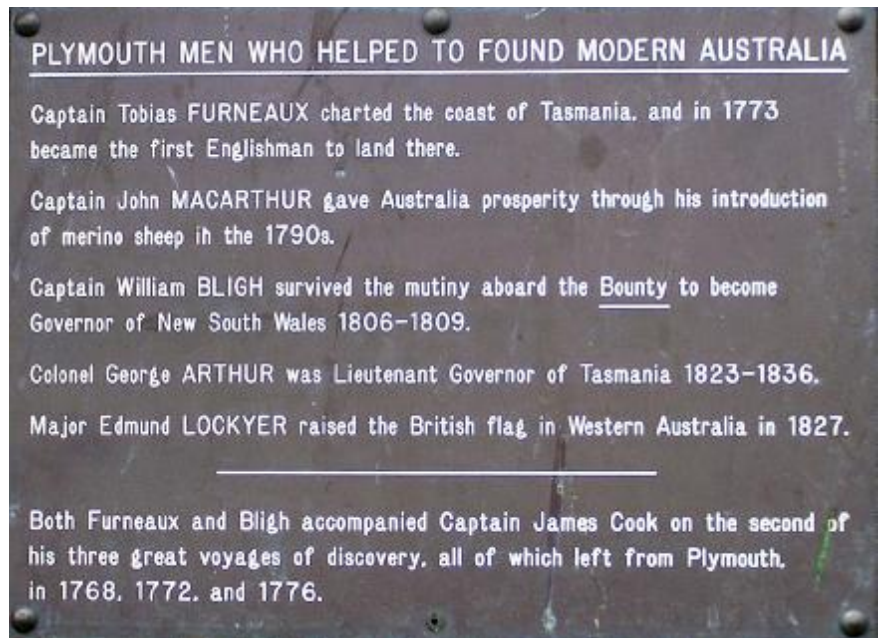


*Plaque commemorating the sailing of the Friendship and the Charlotte, carrying convicts to Australia*



*Plaque commemorating Plymouth men who helped found modern Australia*

*Note the mention of Major Edmund Lockyer, who has been the subject of articles in the spring and winter 2005 issues of The Witheridge Times*

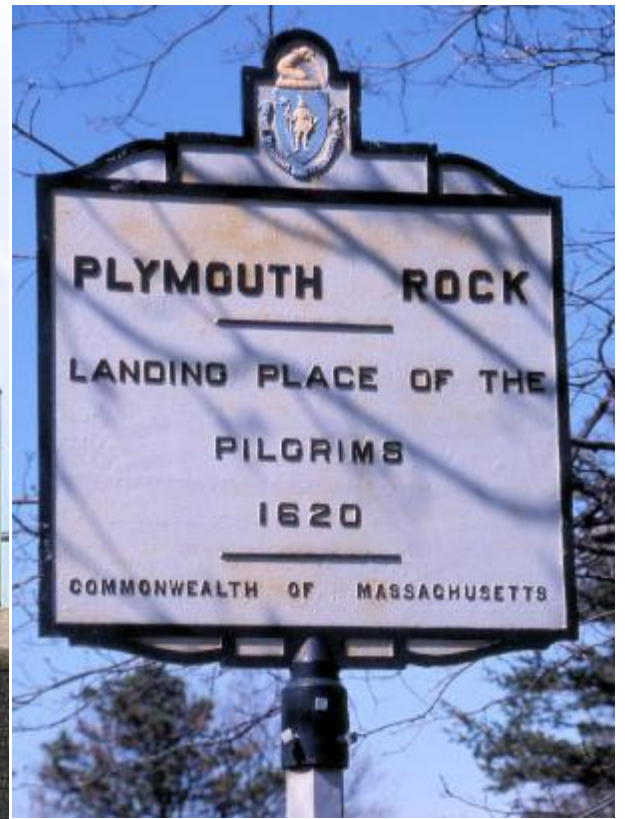


*Plaque commemorating the emigration of thousands of Cornish people to Australia*



*Plaque commemorating the sailing of the William Bryan, the Amelia Thomson, the Oriental, the Timandra, the Blenheim and the Essex to found New Plymouth in New Zealand, between 1840 and 1842*





*Left: Beryl Witheridge, at Plymouth Harbour, at the site from which the Mayflower sailed in 1620*

*Above: for completeness, the sign commemorating the landing of the Pilgrims in New England*

by the harbour, commemorating the involvement of Plymouth in the establishment of colonies in Australia, New Zealand and North America, and we stood on the spot from which the Mayflower sailed for North America, on 6 September 1620; see the above photo. I've also including a photo taken of their landing site in 1981—that's when the photo was taken, not when they landed! (*Plymouth Rock*, itself, was rather disappointing: just a small boulder, enclosed in a protective cage that prevented defacement, but also prevented any decent photograph.)

We also went in search of 26 New Street, a house once owned and occupied by a Witheridge. After a long route march, we found it, right by the harbour, not far from where we started.

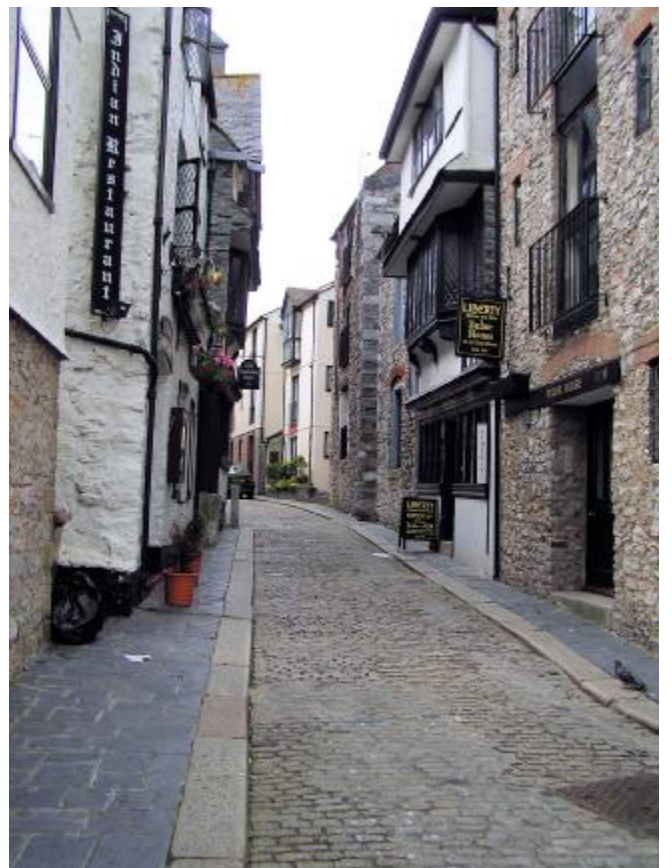
Finally, it was then time to collect Anne from the record office. We found her very pleased with her day's research. We took a leisurely drive back to the hotel, in time for dinner with the few members of the Society staying over until the Tuesday morning.

I cannot vouch for the other members that came to the reunion, but Paul and I had a Wonderful Wacky Witheridge Weekend.



*Above: 26 New Street, situated at the harbour end of New Street*

*Right: looking up New Street, away from the harbour; doesn't look that 'new' does it!*



# Wetheridge Family History Booklets from Richard Wetheridge

Over the years, Richard has been very active in carrying out research into Wetheridge family history. For some time he served as the Society's Research Coordinator. He has gathered together a lot of information into some convenient booklets, which are available directly from him, at the prices shown below (plus postage). All proceeds go to the Society.

Richard can be contacted by e-mail at [richard@rwetheridge.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:richard@rwetheridge.fsnet.co.uk), or by ordinary mail at the address shown inside the front cover of this magazine.

1. St Catherine's House records, 1837 onwards: Wetheridge births. . . . . £0.50
2. St Catherine's House records, 1837 onwards: Wetheridge marriages . . . . . £0.50
3. St Catherine's House records, 1837 onwards: Wetheridge deaths . . . . . £0.75
4. Registration and census districts 1837–1851 . . . . . £0.50
5. Registration and census districts 1852–1946 . . . . . £0.50
6. Mormon IGI: Wetheridge names for Devon up to 1992. . . . . £0.50
7. Ermington Parish records: Wetheridge births and baptisms. . . . . £0.50
8. Ermington Parish records: Wetheridge marriages . . . . . £0.50
9. Ermington Parish records: Wetheridge burials. . . . . £0.50
10. Miscellaneous Wetheridge-connected names from Mormons IGI  
or parish records. . . . . £0.50
11. Miscellaneous Wetheridge-connected names from GRO records . . . . . £0.50
12. Certificates held by the Wetheridge FHS: births . . . . . £0.50
13. Certificates held by the Wetheridge FHS: marriages . . . . . £0.50
14. Certificates held by the Wetheridge FHS: deaths. . . . . £0.50
15. Wetheridge Society 10th Anniversary: Ermington Village . . . . . £1.00
16. Wetheridge Society 10th Anniversary Weekend (colour). . . . . £2.00

*Note:* Much of the information is also available via The Internet, but this means knowing where to look and often requires paying a subscription or access fee.

Richard's booklets are inexpensive and convenient.

## **On the side—AAADD**

Recently, I was diagnosed with AAADD, or Age Activated Attention Deficit Disorder.

This is how it manifests:

I decide to wash my car. As I start toward the garage, I notice that there is post on the hall table. I decide to go through the post before I wash the car.

I lay my car keys down on the table, put the junk mail in the rubbish bin under the table, and notice that the bin is full. So, I decide to put the bills back on the table and empty the rubbish first. But then I think, since I'm going to be near the postbox when I take out the trash anyway, I may as well pay the bills first.

I take my cheque book off the table, and see that there is only one cheque left. My extra cheques are in my desk in the study, so I go to my desk where I find the can of Coke that I had been drinking. I move the Coke aside so that I don't accidentally knock it over. I see that the Coke is getting warm, and I decide I should put it in the fridge to keep it cold.

As I head toward the kitchen with the coke a vase of flowers on the counter catches my eye—they need to be watered. I set the Coke down on the counter, and I discover my reading glasses that I've been searching for all morning.

I decide I better put them back on my desk, but first I'm going to water the flowers. I set the glasses back down on the counter, fill a container with water and suddenly I spot the TV remote. Someone left it on the kitchen table. I realize that tonight when we go to watch telly, I will be looking for the remote, but I won't remember that it's on the kitchen table, so I decide to put it back in the den where it belongs, but first I'll water the flowers.

I splash some water on the flowers, but most of it spills on the floor. So, I set the remote back down on the table, get some kitchen roll and wipe up the spillage. Then I head down the hall trying to remember what I was planning to do.

At the end of the day: the car isn't washed, the bills aren't paid, there is a warm can of Coke sitting on the counter, the flowers aren't watered, there is still only one cheque in my cheque book, I can't find the remote, I can't find my glasses, and I don't remember what I did with the car keys. Then when I try to figure out why nothing got done today, I'm really baffled because I know I was busy all day long, and I'm really tired.

I realize this is a serious problem, and I'll try to get some help for it, but first I need to wash my car...

Don't laugh—if this isn't you yet, your day is coming

**Growing older is mandatory**

**Growing up is optional**

**Laughing at yourself is therapeutic!**

# From the Australian Reunion

In early May, our then chairman, Ron Dixon, sent a message to the Society's overseas representatives in Australia, New Zealand and North America. The message read:

*As many of you will know, this year presents a milestone in the history of the Society, as it was twenty years ago that our Honorary Life President, Kim Cook, initiated the Witheridge Family History Society as it is known today, after years of research. In fact, without her early efforts, you wouldn't be reading this article!*

*For our commemorative meeting over the weekend of 19th. May, we are staying in the heart of Devonshire, (the origins of most known Witheridge lines), at the Coombe Cross Hotel in Bovey Tracey, a typical Dartmoor town, nestling on the edge of the rugged moorland which is Dartmoor.*

*We salute all Witheridges in America, Australia, Canada, France, New Zealand and, indeed, all corners of the globe, and hope that the picnic in Australia on Sunday is a great success and that all your Societies continue to flourish. We look forward to the day when some of you are able to come for a visit.*

*In the meantime, have a good year. Kind regards,*

*Ron Dixon, Chairman*

and during the Annual General Meeting, reciprocal greetings from Australia were read out:

*Greetings to all at the Bovey Tracey Meeting this coming weekend, from the thirty or so at the Witheridge Day at Cataract Dam, NSW, Australia on Sunday 20th. We shall drink a toast to your gathering! Keep a lookout for photos soon; they'll be e-mailed asap. We've had eight 'apologies' and fourteen 'maybes', mainly because of young people being involved in Sunday sport.*

*So, have a great weekend with good weather and a smooth AGM—oh to be in England now that Spring is here—and, if we haven't already indicated so, our 'aye' votes for the changes in the Constitution.*

*Guess both groups will prefer fine weather, at least for that time, but we really should rejoice greatly if it rains all over Australia! Things are grim.*

*Our love to all from all here*

*Allan and Judith*

As promised, the photos arrived, together with a short report.

## **Report from Australia**

*By Judith and Allan Witheridge*

The 2007 Witheridge Picnic Day in Australia was held at Cataract Dam in New South Wales, on 20 May, and was enjoyed by all who came. If we were ever able to order it, the weather on that day was exactly right: sunny blue skies and dry and 'coolish', after some welcome rain up to the Friday before.

Thirty-six of us came together and caught up, some after many years, and it was good to hear 'see you next year' as people left.

Prior to lunch, we had individual family photos taken. Not all family members were there, but everyone's family was represented and all originated from the marriage of Philemon Witheridge and Mary Carveth at Porthleven, Cornwall, in 1871. We are happy to share some of these photos with you.

After lunch, we had the cutting of the cake by Australian representatives, past and present.

Then came the reading of the Greetings from the WFHS, kindly sent by the chairman, Ron Dixon.

We thought of you at Bovey Tracey. Thank you for thinking of us.

*[The family photos can be found on the following pages – Ed.]*



*It tasted as good as it looks. Yum yum!*



*Judith, Allan and Dorothy Witheridge cutting the cake*



*Eric Tibbits,  
Lyn Witheridge,  
Rowena  
Tibbits, Bill and  
Margaret  
Witheridge,  
Daniel Tibbits,  
Geoff  
Witheridge,  
William  
Witheridge*



*Allan, Greig, Judith, Dean, Karen, Joel, Matt, Giverney, Ian, Sylvana, Neil and Rowena  
Witheridge*





*Dorothy Witheridge, founder of the  
Australian Witheridge Picnic*



*Bob & Shirley (granddaughter of Martha  
Witheridge) Noad*



*John & Alma (née Witheridge) Templeman*



*Paul Witheridge, who should have been in  
photo with Allan and Judith Witheridge  
(their youngest son, and brother to Greig,  
Neil and Ian)*



*Hanna, Lynne, Mark, Aiden (little boy), Joe and Marion Witheridge*



*Pum and Daylon Kelly, John and Hansa Witheridge  
(Pum is John's step daughter and Daylon is her son, Hansa's grandson)*

# Greetings from the USA

The Rev David Witheridge sent this greeting, which was read out at Bovey Tracey. In the next issue, we will publish photos from 'mini' reunions organised by Kathy and Paul Witheridge.

*Greetings to my fellow members of the Witheridge Family History Society, gathered in Devon for our Twentieth Anniversary Reunion! How I wish I could be with you! I hope you are having a good turnout, as well as good weather for all the events of the weekend. I'll be thinking of you each day and remembering when I was able to be there with you.*

*Except for my lack of balance, my general health remains good, but I have recently developed macular degeneration in my left eye. However, my ophthalmologist has injected Lucentis into my eye several times, which has not only retarded the development of the macular degeneration, but it even seems to have restored my vision in that eye. I hope so, because I'm writing my family history (a long one), and I hope to finish it while I still have my vision. I can't seem to find time to work on it! Again, greetings to you all, and I hope you have a great weekend!*

*Sincerely, David E. Witheridge*

# Photos from New Zealand

These photos were sent from New Zealand to be shown at the reunion in Bovey Tracey.



*Velma and Rodney Metcalfe  
Velma is the Society's representative for  
New Zealand*



*Andrew Gaylard, his wife, June Gaylard  
née Hazell, Caroline Robinson née  
Gaylard, Pauline Gurnett née Gaylard, her  
husband Peter Gurnett and their daughter,  
Pheobe Gurnett, aged 11 months*

## **On the side—even Sherlock Holmes would have trouble with this!**

At the 1994 annual awards dinner given for Forensic Science, AAFS president Dr. Don Harper Mills astounded his audience with the legal complications of a bizarre death. Here is the story:

On 23 March 1994, the medical examiner viewed the body of Ronald Opus and concluded that he died from a shotgun wound to the head. The decedent had jumped from the top of a ten-story building intending to commit suicide.

He left a note to that effect indicating his despondency. As he fell past the ninth floor, his life was interrupted by a shotgun blast passing through a window, which killed him instantly. Neither the shooter nor the decedent was aware that a safety net had been installed just below at the eighth floor level to protect some building workers and that Ronald Opus would not have been able to complete his suicide the way he had planned.

Ordinarily, Dr. Mills continued, ‘a person who sets out to commit suicide and ultimately succeeds, even though the mechanism might not be what he intended’ is still defined as committing suicide. Mr. Opus was shot on the way to certain death nine stories below at street level, but his suicide attempt probably would not have been successful because of the safety net. This caused the medical examiner to feel that he had a murder on his hands.

The room on the ninth floor from whence the shotgun blast emanated was occupied by an elderly man and his wife. They were arguing vigorously, and he was threatening her with a shotgun. The man was so upset that when he pulled the trigger he completely missed his wife and the pellets went through the window striking Mr. Opus.

When one intends to kill subject A, but kills subject B in the attempt, one is guilty of the murder of subject B. When confronted with the murder charge, the old man and his wife were both adamant. They both said they thought the shotgun was unloaded. The old man said it was his long standing habit to threaten his wife with the unloaded shotgun. He had no intention to murder her. Therefore the killing of Mr. Opus appeared to be an accident, that is, the gun had been accidentally loaded.

The continuing investigation turned up a witness who saw the old couple’s son loading the shotgun about six weeks prior to the fatal accident. It transpired that the old lady had cut off her son’s financial support and the son, knowing the propensity of his father to use the shotgun threateningly, loaded the gun with the expectation that his father would shoot his mother.

The case now becomes one of murder on the part of the son for the death of Ronald Opus.

Now comes the exquisite twist. Further investigation revealed that the son was in fact Ronald Opus. He had become increasingly despondent over both the loss of his financial support and the failure of his attempt to engineer his mother’s murder. This led him to jump off the ten-story building on 23 March, only to be killed by a shotgun blast passing through the ninth-story window. The son had actually murdered himself, so the medical examiner closed the case as a suicide.

# Federation of Family History Societies Ezine

The Federation of Family History Societies (FFHS) has asked all member societies to include this announcement in their official journals. You can see a picture of the front page of their June 2007 issue below.

Wanting to share and distribute family history news, and other interesting and related information, to as large an audience as possible, the Federation of Family History Societies (FFHS) embarked on an exciting new project in the early part of 2007. This was the launch of the Federation Ezine. This is a topical and colourful email newsletter which will carry family and local history news, reviews, competitions and much more to hundreds of thousands of individual researchers around the world, as well as the Federation's Member Societies in the UK and overseas.

If you would like to view the Federation Ezine, it can be located on the FFHS website at [www.ffhs.org.uk/ezine/intro.ph](http://www.ffhs.org.uk/ezine/intro.ph). But why not sign up to receive your own copy of the Federation Ezine which will be emailed out around the middle of February, April, June, August, October and December of each year. You can subscribe on the Federation website, [www.ffhs.org.uk](http://www.ffhs.org.uk).

The screenshot shows the front page of the Federation Ezine. At the top, there is a banner with the FFHS logo and the text 'THE FEDERATION EZINE'. Below this, the page is divided into several sections. On the left, under 'Dear Reader, In This Issue..', there is a list of featured articles with links, such as 'Welcome To the June Edition of the FFHS Ezine', 'Festival of History', 'This Month's Competition', 'Colindale Newspapers Migration Strategy', 'FFHS News', 'Unlocking Your Past', 'Were you a Supermarket Shopper in the 1950s and 1960s?', 'Television Creates a New and Much Older History for "Britain"', and 'Succession planning'. In the center, under 'June 2007 No3', there is a list of featured articles, including 'This Edition of the FFHS Ezine is supported by Your Family Tree Magazine', 'FFHS Diary Dates', 'Education Seminars for Society Officers and Society Members', 'Have You Visited Geneva?', 'GenFair Special Offers', 'WDYTVA - Live... A Good Time Was Had By All', and 'Parliamentary Archives puts documents about the British Slave Trade online'. On the right, there is a large advertisement for 'Your Family Tree' magazine, featuring a 'Special Offer for FFHS Members 3 issues for £1'. Below the advertisement, there is a section titled 'Who Do You Think You Are? - Live!.. A Good Time Was Had By All' with a photo of a busy exhibition hall. At the bottom left, there is a section titled 'Welcome to the June edition of the FFHS Ezine' supported by 'Your family Tree.', featuring a photo of a man and a short paragraph of text.

## *The Journey*

*Spring sun warms my aching knees.  
Have we come so far,  
together?  
Blackbird sings in the blossoming trees  
as we rest, weary,  
eyes closed in the  
smell of grass.  
Thrusting new shoots prickle our sensitivity.  
Hunger assails us  
and thirst.  
Hold my hand as we journey on  
or I may leave you  
alone.*

*Lorna Home*

*The above short poem is from Lorna's book: Inner Eye.*

*Lorna felt it was particularly relevant 'because we all need support as we journey on'. It also seems very apt to me at this particular time.*

### **Post scriptum: the next issue**

The next issue should be with you around the middle of December.

As well as reporting on the 'mini' Witheridge reunions in North America, I shall be publishing other articles, including some that have been deferred from this and the previous issue due to the coverage given to the twentieth anniversary celebrations.

Until the next issue, may good fortune attend you. *The Editor.*

*Continued from inside front cover*

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***Subscriptions***

Remember your annual membership renewal subscriptions are due in January. The subscriptions rates are:

UK membership	£10.00	
Overseas membership	£12.00	( <b>please:</b> subscription <b>must</b> be in <b>UK Pounds Sterling</b> )

and cover everyone at the same address (sharing the same copy of the magazine).

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