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The magazine of the
Witheridge
Family History Society

Volume 23

2009

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<i>Please submit all items for the February 2010 issue of Witheridge Times to the Assistant Editor, email Witheridge1987@aol.com</i>	

continued on inside back cover

The logo on the front cover shows the boundaries of the county of Devon, with black dots for the town of Witheridge and the manor of Witheridge, both listed in the Domesday Book.

WITHERIDGE TIMES

Volume 23

2009

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Letter from the

Honorary Life President



The running of any voluntary society or organisation requires considerable input to keep the wheels turning. Often it falls to the same small group of people, year after year, to do the essential tasks which keep those wheels turning.

It isn't surprising, therefore, that many such voluntary organisations come to a point where the valiant few, for whatever reasons, find they can no longer keep up with the duties expected of them. It may be health, family commitments, pressure of work or simply advancing years, that make it difficult to do those tasks which, in earlier years, had been done willingly, generously and efficiently. Sometimes the halt is permanent, sometimes only temporary.

The **Witheridge FHS** is facing just such a situation. A number of those who have served us very well in past years are now finding it difficult to maintain the workloads previously undertaken on our behalf. We need more volunteers to help us run our Society. Please, if you can spare even just a few hours a month to help us, your input and support will be of great value. Admin skills, computer skills, finance skills, even just good ideas, are all needed!

One of the first effects of such a situation is communication failure. I'm acutely aware that many of our members feel they're in a kind of limbo, unable to attend meetings or reunions, not receiving any news, and not quite sure what is going on. As your Honorary Life President, I feel I have a responsibility to redress that, and I believe the best way to do this is to produce a 'catch-up' issue of *Witheridge Times*.

In order to get this out quickly and efficiently, it will be e-mailed – a process that allows us to use colour! However, if you're not on broadband, or know of a member who isn't on e-mail, please let us know so that we can look at alternatives, perhaps supplying it on disk.

Although I've edited *Witheridge Times* in the past, it was never in the excellent format we've become used to in the last few years – a format I have never, until now, used. I hope you'll forgive me if the presentation is not up to the superb standard we have enjoyed in recent years, but I will do my best until such time as we can get back to normal production.

Inevitably, some items of family news are no longer new, but it wouldn't be right to ignore them. By including as many family items as possible from our 'gap year', we hope to enable our members to catch up with what's been happening in the wider Witheridge family. If I've inadvertently repeated items that have appeared in past issues, I apologise, but I believe it's better to do this than to miss items out.

I'd hoped to include everything in one mammoth 'catch-up' issue, but this made a file much too large for many Internet Service Providers to transmit. I've therefore had to split the file into two halves, of which this is the first. However, by e-mailing this issue of *Witheridge Times*, we avoid print and postage costs, which means the second half can go out in February and not wreck the budget!

Continuing with e-mailed issues is something that the membership will need to consider at the 2010 AGM, with alternatives for those not on broadband. If we can move forward in this way, it will help both communication and budget considerably.

If you have items of family news to be included in the second half of our 'catch-up' issue of *Witheridge Times*, due out in February 2010, please email them to me at Witheridge1987@aol.com by 1 February.

Although the minutes of the 2008 AGM are on-line on the Witheridge FHS web-site, we usually publish them in *Witheridge Times*, so they are included here. The Officers' Reports were published in Spring 2008. A report of the 2009 AGM will follow in the next issue.

One other concern voiced at our 2009 AGM is that of subscriptions. All those present were concerned that members have not had value for their subscriptions in the past year, and we discussed the possibility of extending all subscriptions by one year, to make up for the lack of communication and support. Although no vote was taken at the AGM, it was agreed that this was something we might need to implement later in the year. I believe that time has now come, and will be asking the Committee to ratify this as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, I send you all our apologies, and trust that this *Witheridge Times*, together with the second part in February, will go some way to redressing the lack you have all experienced, and assure you that you are not forgotten!

With my love and very best wishes to you all

Kim Cook

Honorary Life President
Tenterden, Kent
December 2009

Family News

Death of Rev David Witheridge

It is with great sadness that we record the death, in Minneapolis in December 2008, at the age of 94, of **Rev David Witheridge**, the first Honorary Vice-President of the Witheridge FHS. His loss is most keenly felt by his family, and by his many friends in the world of family history, not least those in the Witheridge FHS, who valued his warm friendship and his meticulous research. An obituary is on page 16, followed by a copy (page 18) of the tribute prepared by Kim Cook and read at David's memorial service in June 2009.

Pastures new (1)

In 2008 **Joyce Browne** moved a short distance from her large detached home in Luton to a small apartment in a complex designed for retired people, where two of Joyce's long-term friends are also residents.

At the time of her move, members were notified by email of her new address, but it seems that some emails didn't reach their destination. Joyce's address is 43 Bushmead Court, Hancock Drive, Luton LU2 7GY, her phone number remains the same, and her email address is Joyce.Browne100@btinternet.com.

Pastures new (2)

In 2007, **Barbara and Terry Finemore** moved from their Plymouth home, in the parish where both had grown up, to Nottinghamshire, to be near their daughter Fiona and her children.

While it was inevitably a wrench to leave Plymouth after a life-time there, Barbara and Terry are pleased to be close to Fiona, Jasmine and Sam, where they can give each other mutual support.

*The Finemore home in
Edwinstowe*



Terry's brain injury continues to cause a range of problems, but he enjoys being with the children, and they enjoy having their grandparents close by. Terry's health is well monitored, and he attends a Headway group once a week.

Barbara and Terry also go to a training centre in Newark for people with disabilities and their carers, and both have achieved basic certificates in

computer studies. They continue to be involved in music, and sing with the Mansfield Choral Society, having sung Handel's 'Messiah' and Verdi's 'Requiem' in major local venues.

With a carer who comes in once a week to give Barbara an afternoon off, and respite care one week in eight, Barbara does get some time off, but the stress of being a full-time carer has caused some health problems, not least a nasty bout of shingles, but we're delighted to hear she is now fully recovered.

Barbara and Terry's address is 4 Thoresby Avenue, Edwinstowe, Nr Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, NG21 9ND. Barbara's email address is now barbara@sealrock.co.uk.

A Christening in the Home Counties

Tara and Andrew Witheridge from Langley, Berkshire, had their fourth child, **Tia Rhianne Witheridge**, Christened at St Mary the Virgin, the parish church of Langley Marish, on Sunday 22 June 2008.

Tia, seen left in the arms of her proud Mum, behaved perfectly during the ceremony, which took place as part of the Sunday service. Tia's eldest sister, Bethany, sang in the choir.

The service was also attended by large quantities (no other word for it!) of Tia's aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents.

After the service, everyone retired to Tara and Andrew's nearby home for a splendid garden barbecue on a (thankfully) sunny afternoon. The adults drank Pimm's, and the children covered themselves in gooey chocolate cake. It was a marvellous day.



New grandchildren for Lorna Home

Lorna Home's son, **Richard**, and his partner, **Nadia**, who live in Brussels, had a son, **Leonardo Home**, born 6 August 2008. Congratulations to Nadia and Richard!

What's more, Lorna's daughter, **Elizabeth**, and her partner, **Justin Mason**, had a daughter, **Gwen Florence Anna Home**, born 8 August 2008. Congratulations to Elizabeth and Justin!

And, double congratulations to the proud grandmother – two new grandchildren in the same week. What a marvellous blessing!



Left: Rod and Sue's grandson, Harry, and sister Lily.



Right: Proud grandfather Rod with little James (Jamie) at a recent family wedding

Congratulations 2!

Congratulations also go to **Rod and Sue Witheridge**, who are delighted with the arrival of another grandson. **Harry Flynn Witheridge**, son of Lance and Miranda, and brother of Lily Grace, was born on 11 June 2008 in Christchurch, NZ. All are doing well.

Although Christchurch is a long way from Rod and Sue in Chiswick, London, they do manage to fly south fairly regularly. Rod and Sue's elder son Grant, with Melitta and son James (born July 2007), are much closer, in Isleworth, Middlesex.

Congratulations 3!

Kim and Roy Cook wrote from Tenterden, Kent: On behalf of **Adam and Lisa**, we're delighted to announce the safe arrival of their daughter, **Amelie Sofia**, born on Sunday 3 August 2008 at Epsom Hospital, Surrey, weighing 5 lb 13 oz.

Despite the birth being 15 days early, both mother and daughter are now doing well, and Amelie is a very sunny, smiley soul. Needless to say, dad is ecstatic!



Jason and Zoe are delighted to be uncle and aunt, **Ethan and Lauren** are thrilled to have a first cousin (in both senses of the term), and we, the dotting grandparents, are over the moon!

Left: Lisa and Adam at home with Amelie, just 5 days old.

Xmas and New Year Greetings from New Zealand

Velma and Rodney Metcalfe write from Wellington:

It's that time of the year again, when we send you our best wishes and reflect on 2008.

Actually it's been a rather pleasant year. I gave up work in October 2007 and, as yet, I haven't been tempted back to work! About the same time, Rodney started working a 4x4 shift pattern (four days on, followed by four days off). His working day lasts till 3.00 pm, but the four days off are very pleasant! Of course, the down side is that getting up at 4.00 am. is not so pleasant and going to bed in daylight in summer is difficult.

I spent months spring cleaning and getting rid of things we no longer require. When our computer died, we bought a new iMac with a broadband connection and also a flat screen TV for Christmas.

My mother, **Glenath Hazell née Witheridge**, celebrated her 92nd birthday on 22 August. She still does her own gardening and cooking, but does have help with lawns and cleaning.

We had two trips north to assist her with medical problems this year. In April we drove about 1000 km (600 miles) to Coopers Beach and took Mum to a clinic in Whangarei, where she had successful cataract surgery on both eyes, two weeks apart.

In September, she had day-surgery at Kaitaia Hospital to remove a lesion on her shin and to cover the site with a skin graft. The wound has healed nicely. Rodney flew back to Wellington after seven days and I stayed another ten days, giving Mum time to rest and recover.

After our April trip we had a few days to spare before Rodney returned to work, so we went to Napier for a break. Gorgeous place. We returned for a four-day break in November!

I suppose winter wouldn't be winter without succumbing to colds and flu – and we did! Rodney didn't make it back to work as scheduled and just when I thought I'd escaped, it was my turn!

Winter illness was followed by an influx of guests – three lots in all! The earlier ones fared better as far as the weather was concerned, but we all had a good time.

Winter will be remembered as being extremely wet with not many frosts, but we saw snow from a distance a few times and we certainly felt it at others!

As usual, it's been a busy year for movies: *The Duchess*, *Brideshead Revisited*, *Mamma Mia*, *Atonement*, *The Painted Veil* and *Brick Lane*.

Even a New Zealand one – *Second-Hand Wedding* – and *Cranford* and *Rebus* on TV.

Regards and best wishes for 2009

Vel & Rodney

Members' e-mail addresses

We currently have e-mail addresses for only about two-thirds of the membership. If you are one of the remaining third, or even *think* you could be one, *please* help us out by sending an e-mail to Editor@WitheridgeFHS.com, with your correct e-mail address. If you want it to remain private – that is, not published in *Witheridge Times* – just say so.

Please note that it is becoming increasingly useful for the Society to communicate with members via e-mail. Essential notices, particularly those concerning Reunions and AGMs, will probably be e-mailed in future. It doesn't cost us any postage, which is vital in keeping costs down. If we don't know your e-mail address, you *will* miss out on some important notices.

This 'catch-up' issue of *Witheridge Times* is also being distributed initially by e-mail, and we're now looking very seriously at the possibility of making this our prime means of distribution. This would have the double advantage of avoiding print costs as well as postage – essential if we are to keep on track financially, without increasing subscriptions.

We do know that some members in England don't have Internet access, and we'll try and keep them informed of essential information by post. There are also some who do have Internet access, but don't have broadband, which is a problem if we do move towards e-mail publication of *Witheridge Times*. We're currently trying to determine what might be the most cost-effective alternatives, and will ensure that no-one misses out, but the more we can distribute electronically, the more efficient we can be.

There's one in every class . . .!

A teacher was giving a lesson on the circulation of the blood. Trying to make the matter clearer, she said, 'Now, class, if I stood on my head, the blood, as you know, would run into it, and I would turn red in the face'.

'Yes', the class said. 'Then why is it that while I'm standing upright in the ordinary position the blood doesn't run into my feet?'

One little fellow shouted out, 'Cos your feet aren't empty!'

The Witheridge 2008 Reunion and Annual General Meeting (AGM)

by *Beryl Witheridge (Secretary)*

The Society's AGM was held on the morning of the first day of the annual Witheridge Family History Society reunion on Saturday 17 May, at the Holiday Inn, Ashford, Kent.



1 Opening and welcome

The meeting was opened at 10.00 am by the Vice-Chairman, **Paul Witheridge**, who welcomed everyone to the 21st Annual Witheridge Reunion. He also stated that he had received well-wishes for the reunion from members in Australia, New Zealand and North America. He added that the Australian members were holding a family picnic on Sunday 18 May, and wished them all a very happy time.

Present: Joyce Browne, Ethan Cook, Jason Cook, Kim Cook, Lauren Cook, Roy Cook, Brenda Dixon, Ron Dixon, Beryl Witheridge and Paul Witheridge (Marlow).

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from **Shirley and Derek Andrews**, **Barbara and Terry Finemore**, **Andrew Gaylard** and family, **Pamela and Derek Glynn**, **Lorna Home**, **Nicola Humphrey**, **Velma and Rodney Metcalfe**, **Marcia Taylor**, **David Torborg**, **Valerie Wells**, **Annette Witheridge**, **Jenny and Mark Witheridge**, **Jim Witheridge**, **June and David Witheridge**, **Kathy and Paul Witheridge** and **Maureen and Richard Witheridge**. Kim apologised on behalf of **Rev David Witheridge**, and also on behalf of **Alan and Alison Smith** (who were unable to attend the AGM, due to a prior commitment, but did arrive later).

3 Minutes of the 2007 AGM held at Bovey Tracey, Devon

It was proposed that these minutes, as published in *The Witheridge Times* issue of Summer 2007, be accepted. Proposed by **Brenda Dixon**, seconded by **Roy Cook**, and passed unanimously.

4 Matters arising from the minutes of the 2007 AGM

There were no matters arising from these minutes.

5 Officers' Reports

Reports from the Chairman, Secretary, Membership Secretary, Editor, Webmaster, Research Co-ordinator and Treasurer were

published in the Spring 2007 issue of *The Witheridge Times*. There were no matters arising from these reports, and it was proposed that they be accepted. Proposed by Ron Dixon, seconded by Kim Cook, and passed unanimously.

6 Election of Officers and Committee Members

The entire Committee was standing for re-election. As there were no other nominations, it was proposed that they be elected forthwith. Proposed by **Jason Cook**, seconded by **Brenda Dixon**, passed unanimously. The following were therefore 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 Co-ordinator:</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

In addition, **Ron Dixon** agreed to continue as the Society's auditor and was proposed by **Kim Cook**, seconded by **Roy Cook** and elected unanimously.

7 Overseas Representatives

All the Society's Overseas Representatives – **Judith** and **Allan Witheridge** for Australia, **Velma Metcalfe** for New Zealand, and **Kathy Witheridge** for North America – had agreed to continue in their roles. The meeting passed a unanimous vote of thanks to them, (proposed by **Richard Witheridge** and seconded by **Paul Witheridge**) for their ongoing efforts.

8 Effects of the increase in the annual subscription to the Federation of Family History Societies (FFHS)

This item, proposed by **Beryl Witheridge** (Treasurer) and seconded by **Paul Witheridge** (Assistant Treasurer), was intended to review the Society's membership of national societies such as the Federation of Family History Societies (FFHS) and the Guild of One-Name Studies (GoONS) in the light of the increasing costs faced

by the WFHS. However, the discussion rapidly widened to consider the Society's overall financial situation.

Currently, our income from membership subscriptions is about £525.00 per year. Our magazine costs are about £420.00 per year, and if we include other expenditure (research budget, AGM costs, FFHS and GoONS subscription, Christmas cards and the fee for registering under the UK's Data Protection Act), we are looking at an overall budget of at least £650.00 per year.

Clearly, despite our current healthy bank balance, we have to cut costs, raise subscriptions or go bust.

Two of the obvious candidates for cutting costs are the FFHS and GoONS subscriptions, currently set at £30.00 per year and £12.00 per year respectively. However, the Treasurer, **Beryl Witheridge**, reported that the FFHS is planning to increase its 2009 subscription in line with inflation, followed by another increase in 2010. The meeting discussed what we derive from FFHS membership. It seemed that the only one we actually make any use of is the 'free' public liability insurance cover, and that is used only once a year. It was also suggested that we do not even need this, as any function room or hall that we hire for our meeting comes with such liability cover. However, as **Joyce Browne** pointed out, this would not suffice in the event of damage or personal injury *caused* by a Society member.

In the end, a motion was tabled to discontinue membership of the FFHS when our current subscription runs out at the end of the year. It was proposed by **Roy Cook**, seconded by **Paul Witheridge**, and passed unanimously. Absentee votes from **Pamela Glynn**, **Maureen Witheridge** and **Richard Witheridge** also supported this motion.

The meeting also discussed the Society's membership of the GoONS. It was generally felt that we should retain this, especially as a one-name family history society, we are more aligned with the GoONS. A tentative motion to discontinue the GoONS membership failed to find a proposer or seconder and was abandoned.

Kim Cook felt that it was worth looking into alternative family history organisations such as the Council of Family Societies. She also wondered if a new organisation might materialise if large family history societies (such as the Devon FHS), were to leave the FFHS over the proposed subscription increases. She proposed that the Committee be tasked with looking at such alternatives, including the Council of Family Societies, and also at alternative

means of obtaining any insurance cover that the WFHS legally requires. This was seconded by Joyce Browne and passed unanimously.

[Note: Extensive Internet searches have so far failed to find any current information about any Council of Family Societies, or Council of Family History Societies. If any member has a contact with this organisation, please let the Secretary know.]

The meeting also discussed whether it was necessary to increase the subscriptions by £2.00 per year to cover the increased costs. There was a natural reluctance to do so, but everybody realised that, sooner or later, we either had to increase subscriptions, substantially reduce our costs, or go bust. **Joyce Browne** felt that this was not something we should do at the moment, given the fact that member of our members were facing touch economic times. In the end, **Kim Cook** proposed that we should increase the subscription in 2010. This was seconded by **Jason Cook**, but was defeated by a majority of one.

9 Regional get-togethers

The introduction of regional meetings was proposed by **Pamela Glynn** and seconded by **Kim Cook**. As Pamela was unable to attend the meeting, Kim spoke to the motion, reminding members that some successful local meetings had occurred in the early days of the Society. Because such meetings could include members who were unable to attend the Annual Reunion, they helped retain members who might otherwise lose interest, and also held out the possibility of gathering additional family history. Kim also held up the example of the 'cousins' lunches' which she and Roy hosted at irregular intervals, and which attracted as many as 30 people. Others cited the meetings that were held in Australia and Canada. **Beryl Witheridge** relayed Pamela's suggestion that local members could be invited for tea, to a barbecue or just for a drink at a pub.

In the end, it was agreed to minute that the Society was in favour of encourage informal local gatherings, whether in a member's home or at some other local venue, and would be happy to publicise this in the magazine.

10 Cost of membership in New Zealand and Australia

This motion was proposed by **Paul Witheridge** and seconded by **Beryl Witheridge**. Paul noted that the issue really arose out of a point made by **Sue Witheridge** at the Society's 2008 AGM. It was

also noted that the Society's representative in New Zealand did not feel that this was a big issue.

Paul said that the only way he could think of reducing the overseas subscription costs was to offer an electronic copy of the magazine for a minimal subscription. The member could download the magazine from the members only area of the Society's web-site. However, he felt that this solution had its own problems. While the printed magazine dropped through a member's letterbox, an electronic copy required the member to go to the web-site, log on and download it, which is something they could easily forget to do.

Jason Cook suggested that the magazine should be e-mailed directly to members, but **Paul Witheridge** said that this could face problems, given the size of the email attachment which might not be accepted by some ISPs, and would definitely be a problem for any member still using dial-up access to the Internet.

Although there was much discussion of the issues and possible alternatives, no conclusion was reached and the matter was shelved indefinitely or until more input was received from overseas.

11 Christmas card charity for 2008 to be Oxfam

This was proposed by **Brenda Dixon**, seconded by **Beryl Witheridge** and passed unanimously. There was also some discussion of whether we should be sending out these cards, in view of the state of the Society's finances. However, everyone agreed that it is an important part of the 'social glue' that holds the Society together.

12 Date and venue for the 2009 Reunion

Various options were discussed. These included separating the AGM from the Reunion, having an AGM on a Saturday afternoon to eliminate some of the cost of overnight stays, hiring a village hall and bringing our own food, choosing a geographically central area, and holding the AGM remotely via email and Internet conferencing.

It was agreed to ask the Committee to look into the matter of holding the AGM remotely. This was proposed by **Paul Witheridge**, seconded by all the other attendees, and passed unanimously.

13 Any other business

There was no other business.

The meeting was closed by the acting Chairman at 12.45 pm.



The 2008 Witheridge Family Reunion

by Joyce Browne

One is tempted to use ‘w’ adjectives to describe the occasion: *wonderful* would be appropriate, but so would *wet* – that is until Sunday morning when the treasure hunt took place (described on page 18).

On Friday 16 May, I travelled to Ashford in Kent. Not for nothing is Kent called ‘the garden of England’, and the garden certainly was in bloom. Recent mild winters and heavy rainfall had caused trees to explode into leaf, and cascades of blossom fell like brilliant waterfalls in the hedgerows.

The hotel looked promising – a building of supposedly olde worlde charm and I waited in the reception area with pleasant anticipation for the others to arrive.

Paul and Beryl Witheridge seemed to take a long time at the desk. No wonder! The clerk had no record of their two-night booking but eventually a room was found for them. No sooner was this sorted out than Brenda and Ron Dixon had a similar experience – only worse. It was discovered that they had been booked in at another hotel, in the same group, three miles away. How this could have happened was a mystery which could not be explained. No amount of persuasion could obtain a room for them and they had to be satisfied with the promise of a place at the table at dinner and a room for the Saturday night. All six members of the Cook family also joined us for dinner.

The dining room was originally a barn with ceiling beams which I was told were twelfth century. This I did not believe for a moment, but they were certainly old and dirty. Our party included two friends of Paul and Beryl who lived in Ashford and we were having a lively and interesting evening when a waiter knocked a glass of red wine and a glass of water over Beryl. She took it in very good part but she was soaked through!

Saturday dawned wet, and after a ‘do it yourself’ breakfast it was time for the AGM, and we welcomed Kim and Roy Cook, Brenda and Ron Dixon, Jason and Zoe Cook and their two delightful children, Ethan aged nine and Lauren aged four.

It was a lively meeting despite the small number (nine adults). Officers were elected, important issues were discussed, including the

financial position of the Society, and possible venues for future meetings. We expressed our appreciation of the interest shown and work done by overseas members and wished we could unite with them more frequently. (All this was minuted by Beryl.)

The meeting was unable to decide on a venue for the next AGM and Reunion and the Committee is to have further discussion on this.

Alison and Alan Smith joined us in the afternoon and we were appreciative of Kim's presentation on *The Witheridge Family of Kent*.

There is a suggestion, due to the use of the uncommon first name *Sylvester*, that this family may have originated in Modbury, Devon, but as yet this is not proven. Kim produced documents and wills showing that the Kent family prospered. They were in the ironmongery trade, one was a surgeon and another was described as 'gent' indicating a certain social position. They engaged in local politics – sometimes popular and sometimes not. Some members moved to London and then to Birmingham, but the line appears to have died out in Kent. *[We shall be publishing an article based on Kim's talk in a later issue.]*

We were in festive mood when we met for dinner, but the weather had taken a down-turn and the ladies were so cold that we sat wearing anoraks gallantly provided by the gentlemen. What a waste of the posh frocks! However we could see the funny side of it all, and the lively conversation and warm and friendly feelings made it an enjoyable occasion.

Thankfully on Sunday the weather improved, and the treasure hunt party left the hotel in sunshine and I left for home.



Above left: Alan and Alison Smith, who joined us in the afternoon to hear Kim's talk on the Witheridge Family of Kent.

Left: Jason Cook, Joyce Browne, Ron Dixon and Brenda Dixon, with Roy Cook in the background.

The Treasure Hunt

by *Brenda Dixon*



The AGM was over and all matters put to bed.
Our minds, on Sunday morning, rested on what lay
ahead.

The challenge that confronted us was taking us
afar,
through lovely Kentish countryside, a treasure
hunt by car.

The detailed charts of where to go were done by Paul and Beryl.
(Informative, as ever, so ignore them at your peril!)
In a garden centre car park we were told to meet at ten
to be given our instructions (oh, and don't forget the pen).

There were altogether eight groups there who'd entered for the fun,
with lots of cheeky banter 'til the check-in had been done.
We had to split some families up to get the whole thing on.
(The people in our car were me, Kim, little Ethan, Ron).

With quite a lot of children here they needed things to do,
and being cooped up in a car for hours gets a 'Boo'!
So Paul and Beryl, in their wisdom, made a children's sheet
of different clues in picture form so they, too, could compete.

So ... off we go armed with the clues to see how we would fare,
with eyes stuck out like organ stops and heads high in the air.
We came upon clue number three, (how many more to do?)
And realised, to our dismay, we'd missed clues one and two!

We grown-ups had our special list of clues to keep us working,
two different signs and oast houses as well to find... no shirking!
The scenery was beautiful and terribly distracting,
But we watch the clues (and think of all the points we'll be attracting).

We went through Chilham village which was such a joy to see,
and round the square (the clues were there) we gathered them with
glee.
And through the lanes and round the bends we searched, sometimes in
vain,
with all that beauty, happily, in fulsome sun, no rain.

It doesn't seem as though the course was over twenty miles, (the clues, and then the answers, had produced a lot of smiles). The thoughtful clues provided must have taken B and R. a lot of time, together with the plotting routes by car.

Vicarage Road and Potter's Corner, Challock White Hill too, (I'm illustrating some of all the places we went through). The Halfway House and Pested Lane and Taylor's Hill to Chilham, with 'Little Guzzles', 'Impkins Farm' and 'Maelstrom House', (should kill'em!)

The Chequers', 'George' and 'Flying Horse'—the pubs are with us still, and 'Soakham Farmhouse', (lovely name), with 'Brew House' and 'Pucks Hill'.

So ... on to where the 'Halfway House' would give us lunch by one, wherein we'd learn from B and P exactly how we'd done.

And speaking for the children here, which, if you please, I'll do, Kim's grandson Ethan sat with us and saw the whole thing through. And sometimes, quite inspired, he, like the others, found them all, So each got a certificate to grace their bedroom wall.

And who came first? I'll write it down for everyone to see, Mike Curtis and his group who are all friends of B and P. Second in was Beryl's niece and partner, David and Sophie who also did a splendid job; they too received a trophy.

But as they read the next one out we couldn't speak a word, for despite our lack of confidence we'd actually come third! (Since missing out clues one and two we took a different stance. We felt with that omission that we didn't have a chance).

I could go on forever but I think you've had enough, but everybody finished, even though it seemed quite tough. It just remains for me to give a very loud 'Three cheers' to Paul and Beryl for their work – it must have taken years!

We know that when you two do things, you do it to perfection, and all the rather testing times pass through without detection, so when you're looking back on things in later times of leisure, we hope you both will realise you gave a lot of pleasure.

Well said, Brenda! Your jaunty verse captures the spirit of the event so well, and echoes the thanks of all present to Paul and Beryl – Hon Asst Ed

2008 AGM & Reunion Gallery



Left: At the end of the first day of the Reunion, with business over, Kim Cook (left), presented Beryl and Paul Witheridge with tokens of appreciation from all present, with a vote of thanks for their hard work in organising the event.



Above: Lauren Cook, daughter of Jason & Zoe, and granddaughter of Roy & Kim, with Joyce Browne. Lauren is wearing a bonnet given to her by Joyce, which Joyce had made 16 years earlier for the Hat Competition at the 1992 Reunion! The story behind this hat, and another entered in the competition, will appear in the February 2010 issue of Witheridge Times.



Above: Brenda and Ron Dixon enjoying the sunshine after winning the WFHS section of the treasure hunt.



Above: Andrew Witheridge, son of Paul and Beryl, with wife Tara and children Caitlin, Bethany, Thomas (hiding behind his certificate) and baby Tia.

All the children who took part in the treasure hunt received a certificate of participation, together with a prize of a special chocolate bar (much to the disgust of parents who had to deal with the apparently unstoppable spread of chocolate over the surface of their offspring)



Above: Christopher Witheridge, son of Paul and Beryl, with daughter Alex and her friend Louise, who had joined in the treasure hunt.



Left: The Cook family, Roy, Kim, Zoe and Jason, with (in front), Ethan and Lauren.

Kim and Ethan joined up with Brenda (Kim's cousin) and Ron Dixon for the Treasure Hunt, and were surprised and delighted to be in the top team from the Witheridge FHS!

Obituary
Rev David E Witheridge
1914-2008



It was with great sadness that we learned, in December 2008, of the death of David Witheridge of Minneapolis, the first Honorary Vice-President of the Witheridge Family History Society.

David Edward Witheridge was born on 15 August 1914, in Bay City, near Saginaw, Michigan. David was the third of four children born to **William Allen Witheridge** and **Edith Sophia Nemitz**, his siblings being **William Nemits Witheridge**, **Louise Alice Witheridge**, and **John Meredith Witheridge**, all of whom pre-deceased him.

David's grandfather, **William Witheridge**, had been born in Combmartin, Devon, in 1856, but by the late 1870s the family had moved to Glamorgan, South Wales. In 1887/88 William, with his wife **Mary Jane Allen** and four surviving children, including David's father, moved to the USA, where three further children were born.

David grew up in the Saginaw area, and initially trained as a heating and ventilating engineer, working for his father's business. However, his true vocation was to the Christian ministry, and he left the family business to train as a Baptist minister.

On 5 September 1941 David married **Elizabeth Helen Kendall Plumb**, a teacher and Sunday School teacher, who had also been born and raised in the Saginaw area. The family soon grew, with son **James (Jim)**, born in 1946, and **Thomas (Tom)** in 1947.

David's first ministry posting took them to Illinois, where they remained until 1951, when David was appointed Executive Director of the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches. Here David's superb administrative and organisational skills came to the fore, co-ordinating Christian work in a city packed with churches of every denomination.

David and Elizabeth shared a strong belief in justice and equality for all, at a time when to be Native American or black meant adverse discrimination at almost every turn. David was never one to make a fuss, or display any anger he felt, which would waste time and energy. Expletives were certainly never on his agenda. Instead, he would say 'Oh my!' in any one of a dozen different ways; with compassion at bad

news, with enthusiasm at exciting news, with joy at good news, with a querying upward inflection when he wanted to hear more, and with determination when he heard of a situation where he could make a difference. Afterwards, he would think and pray, and then work quietly and efficiently to lobby those who had the means and opportunity to change things.

David had long had a passion for family history, and in 1967 he found copies of London telephone directories in a Minnesota library, and wrote to all the Witheridges listed! One of these was my aunt, Dorothy Witheridge who, knowing that I'd been researching our family for some years, passed David's letter to me. Thus began a friendship that lasted over 40 years, and which has been a great blessing.

David was always generous in sharing his research, and taking on research for others, and his support and encouragement were instrumental in enabling the dream of a Witheridge one-name society to come to fruition. In my tribute, sent to his memorial service in June 2009 (see page 24), I recorded the love and gratitude for David felt not only by my own family, but by all in the Witheridge FHS, whether or not they had ever met him.

Our thoughts and prayers are with his family, particularly Jim and David, Tom, and Rebecca, who have lost a dearly-loved father, grandfather and friend.

Kim Cook



At the Witheridge home in Irving Avenue, Minneapolis, in 1996.
From left, back: Rebecca Witheridge (grand-daughter), her mother Virginia, Jim Witheridge (son); front: David Torborg, his mother Margaret Torborg, David Witheridge, and Tom Witheridge (son).

Tribute to David Witheridge

This tribute to David Witheridge was sent to his memorial service by Kim Cook, on behalf of both the Cook family, and the Witheridge FHS. The memorial service was delayed until June 2009, to avoid travelling difficulties inevitable in a Minneapolis winter, and was held on what would have been David's 95th birthday. Some photos have been added.

David was a very special and truly remarkable man, and all the more so because he was genuinely unaware of just how special he was. Totally without any sense of self-importance, he was perceptive, astute and above all, loving and caring. How could you not love him?

I first came in to contact with David and his late wife Elizabeth in 1968, when he wrote to an aunt of mine in London, England, about Witheridge family history, and I dealt with the correspondence. It was such a relief simply to find someone else who was researching the Witheridge families, and who didn't think the whole business of family history was a touch weird!

The joy of finding a fellow family history researcher soon widened to an even greater delight as family history turned simply into family. Despite the lack of evidence of any blood ties, we soon felt that David and Elizabeth were family, and they regarded Roy and me as family, for we shared many other important aspects of our lives, not least a deep Christian faith. Soon this family bond grew to embrace Jim and 'young' David (Torborg), Tom and his family, and our sons Jason and Adam and their families.

The geographical distance wasn't an obstacle, even in those pre-computer, pre-Internet days. The letters flew back and forth, sometimes erratically as either David or I encountered other pressing matters, but always we picked up as though there had been no break. Soon research news was more than matched by family news, often with photos enclosed. It became routine for us to exchange phone calls on birthdays and Christmas, and we also phoned on Thanksgiving, even though this isn't a holiday in the UK.

Shortly after our first exchange of letters, Roy and I were disconcerted to learn that our son, Jason, then an infant, was very ill. As soon as David and Elizabeth learned of this, they sent wonderful letters of encouragement, assuring us of their love and prayer support. This support was always there for us, and we in turn gave them all the love and prayer support we could.



June 1976: David and Elizabeth in Sutton, Surrey, shortly after arriving for their first visit to the UK.

The Atlantic gap was bridged five times – three times when David came to England and twice when Roy and I visited Minneapolis. David's first visit, with Elizabeth, was for three months in 1976, partly holiday, and partly research into the work of Councils of Churches in the UK. We were delighted when they made our home, then on the outskirts of London, their base, and after each foray further afield, we rejoiced in their return. We

had great fun, particularly over the quirky language differences in words like lift (elevator), waistcoat (vest), boot (trunk), and flat (apartment), and over differences in food and menus. Jason (then just seven years old, and now nudging 41!) was fascinated by David's penchant for vinegar on his baked beans, and still eats them that way. A little 'Davidism' lives on in England!

Our first visit to Minnesota, in 1990, was a revelation! We had thought our hospitality was pretty good, but Minnesota hospitality far exceeded ours! The wonderfully warm welcome we had, not only from David and Elizabeth, but from Tom and his family, from Jim and David and the Torborg family, from others of the Witheridge clan, and from the Heltsleys, the Irving Avenue neighbours, and from the many churches we visited, was overwhelming.

For the first time we became fully aware of the extent, practicality and impact of David's quiet yet efficient determination to bring people of all cultures and denominations together, to acknowledge the intrinsic worth of each person and give them the respect and social justice that all deserve. And everywhere we went, from elegant neighbourhoods to less affluent areas, from magnificent churches to tin chapels, from back-yard barbecues to Chippewa pow-wows and feasts, there was clearly so much affection for David and Elizabeth. The love and respect in which they were held opened so many doors for us, and we learned so much. It was at once heart-warming and humbling.

Ever since 1961, when I had first started researching the Witheridge name, I had dreamed that one day there would be a one-name group enabling Witheridges to share their research, being instrumental in reuniting different branches of the family, and restoring the sense of

family throughout the world. Although David wasn't able to help set up such a group in the UK, his support and encouragement kept the dream alive until, with the enthusiastic support of Annette Witheridge, the dream came true in 1987.

Not only was David our first overseas member, but he was also a stalwart and very generous contributor to the Society's research, providing material for family trees and articles on so many branches of his Combmartin family tree. His research was, like everything else David did, thorough, meticulous, accurate and reliable. Such was our appreciation of his enormous contribution to the Society that in May 1996 he was elected unanimously by the membership as the Society's Honorary Vice President for life.

However, the minutes recording this decision weren't published immediately, as a few weeks later Roy and I were winging our way across the Atlantic for a second visit with David.

This visit was to include the first-ever Witheridge Day in the USA, held on 8 June in the Minnesota History Center. David, his family and friends, organised a wonderful day, bringing together Witheridges from many parts of the USA, as well as from Canada, Australia and the UK.

What his family knew, but David didn't, was that Roy and I had brought with us an illuminated citation on vellum, commissioned specially from an artist, recording his appointment as the Witheridge Society's Honorary Vice-President, and recognising David's 'many years of meticulous research, faithfully recorded and generously shared'.

I know some here today will remember that wonderful occasion, when temperatures in the upper 80s were exceeded only by the warmth, love and fun of a very memorable day.

In his grace before the meal, David gave thanks not only for the food, but also for the fellowship of friends and families, which was always very close to his heart .

Surprised and moved by the unexpected presentation after lunch, David was temporarily lost for words, but his acceptance speech again

Minnesota History Center, 8 June 1996: David receives the citation recording his appointment as Honorary Vice-President of the Witheridge FHS





Tiverton, 1997: David with fellow guests at the 10th Anniversary Reunion of the Witheridge FHS

emphasised the joy and friendship that his Witheridge research had brought him. It didn't seem to have occurred to David, always such a modest man, that the joy he had gained had been given out many times over, and had blessed those who had had the privilege of coming to know him as a result of his research.

The following year David came to England for the 10th Anniversary Reunion of the Witheridge Society, held in Devon, close to the village of Witheridge. Many members who had never met David were delighted to meet up with the man whose support and encouragement had been such a key factor in the founding of the Society and its subsequent success. After the reunion we were able to fulfil David's wish to visit many of his cousins still living in Devon, before returning to our home for a quieter time together.

We have so many more memories of David, all of them filled with love. Recapping on the characteristics we found in him, he was perceptive, astute, caring, encouraging, supportive, fun, hospitable, practical, determined, a man of deep faith and social justice, meticulous, accurate, reliable, generous, modest, and above all a man of peace, love and reconciliation. In the words of our young grandson, Ethan 'truly remarkable'.

Roy and I are so very sad that we can't be with you in person today to honour this lovely man. Indeed, we're doubly sad – sad because we miss David, and sad because we shall miss being with the family, sharing your memories of him, renewing old friendships and making new ones, something David loved to see. And tonight we shall miss the phone call that would have marked his 95th birthday.

But we can also rejoice that death has not separated David from the love of God, a love which overflowed from him into the lives of so many. David is now 'with Christ, which is far better', and our loss is heaven's gain.

Tenterden, June 2009

New Members

Introduced by Joyce Witheridge

We have four new full members and thirteen further family members to introduce in this issue. The first is

Captain Simon Witheridge

18 St Mary Abbots Terrace

London W14 8NX

e-mail: simon.witheridge@smith.williamson.co.uk



We are delighted to welcome Simon Witheridge and his family, together with his brother, **Captain Philip Witheridge**, and two sisters, **Mrs Ann Pohlschmidt née Witheridge** and **Mrs Clare Naghdi née Witheridge** and their families, as members of the Witheridge Family History Society.

The father of Simon, Philip, Ann and Clare, was **Colonel Anthony Gilbert Witheridge**, who was a member of the Society until his death in 1998. His four children were, in fact, family members with him, and so it is an extra pleasure to see them return the Society as full members.

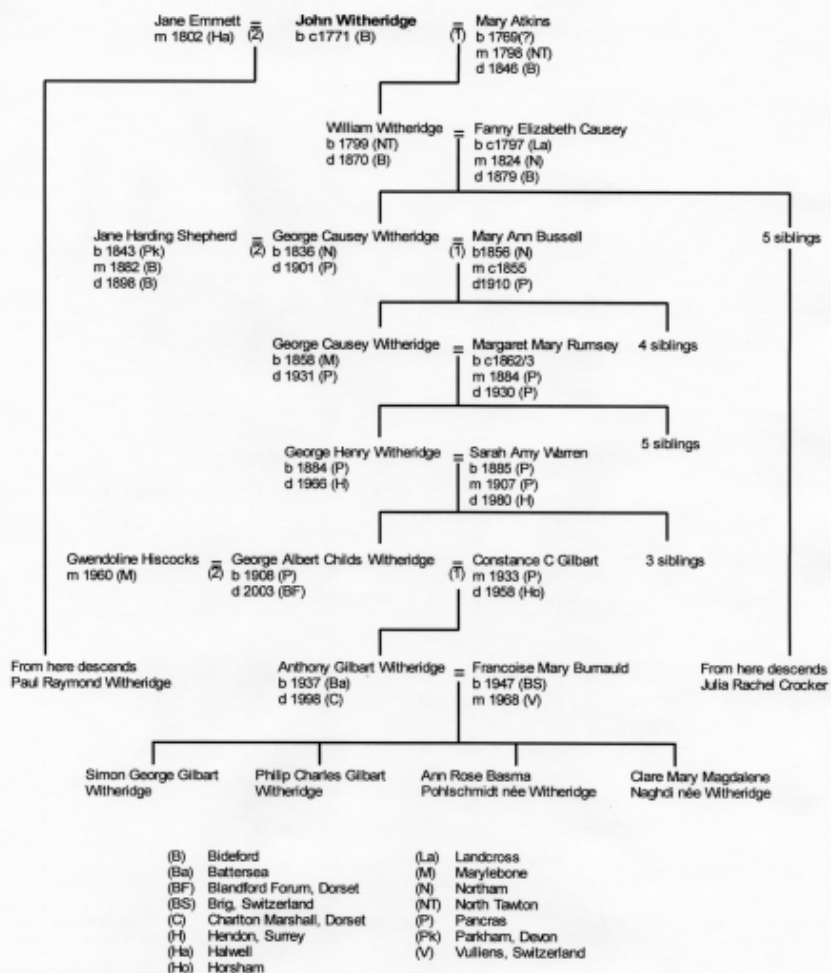
They are descended from a line which originated in Bideford, north Devon, and subsequently moved to London and the Home Counties.

We can follow this family with certainty back to **John Witheridge** who married **Mary Atkins** in North Tawton in 1798. John and Mary had a son called **William**, born 1799, who married **Fanny Elizabeth Causey**. We have articles about this John in *The Witheridge Times* of Summer 1996 and Winter 1996.

On 12 October 1802, John made a sworn statement to the Justices of the Peace in order to obtain a certificate of settlement in the parish of Halwell, south Devon, where he had married **Jane Emmett**. The time-scale of events of his life given in this statement leads us to believe that he was born in Bideford circa 1771 and therefore that he was not the John Witheridge who married Ann Lee in 1791. We would welcome further evidence on this point.

The facing page shows the tree for the family line of John Witheridge, which has produced many talented and distinguished people, and we are delighted to have more members from this line. It also shows that two other current Society members, Julia Crocker and Paul Witheridge (Marlow), are connected to this family.

Bideford Witheridge Family T ree



Compiled by Joyce R Browne, December 2008

One interesting fact emerged from a conversation with Simon Witheridge during the compilation of this chart. His grandfather was Christened George Albert Childs Witheridge and he happily used this name throughout his life. However, he was meant to be Christened *Charles*, but the vicar was a little hard of hearing!

Coming Soon!

Events

Reunion and AGM

The **Witheridge FHS Reunion and Annual General Meeting** is due to be held on 12 June 2010 in Tenterden, Kent. Please put the date in your diary now! Full details will be published in the second half of our 'catch-up' issue of *Witheridge Times*, due out in February.

Some Committee Members will be standing down this year. Between them they have covered many posts, for which we are very grateful, but this does mean we will be looking for quite a few people to help us run the **Witheridge FHS**. None of the individual posts is a great burden, but it's hard for those who have to combine a number of tasks. The more people we have on the Committee the lighter the individual load, so please consider whether you can help in any way.

Informal Reunion

Jim Witheridge and **David Torborg** will be in England for a few days at the end of September, prior to sailing from Southampton to New York on the *Queen Mary 2*! The sailing date is Saturday 2 October.



Queen Mary 2 lying off Southampton

While in the UK, they'd like to meet up with as many friends as possible, so we're planning an informal reunion in or near Hampshire. If you think you might be able to attend, please email Pamela Glynn (pamela.glynn@talktalk.net), so that we can arrange a date that suits most people.

Next issue of *Witheridge Times*

The second part of our 'catch-up' issue will go out in February. This will include details of the 2009 Reunion & AGM, information on the 2010 event, more family news and, if space permits, an article on *The Mystery Mariner and his Lady*, the story of the parents of **William James Witheridge** of Plymouth. If you have any news to share, or if you'd like to know more about Committee posts likely to become vacant, please email the Hon President at witheridge1987@aol.com.

Meanwhile, we wish all our members a joyful, healthy and safe 2010.

continued from inside front cover

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UK membership **£10.00** **Overseas membership** **£12.00**

Please note that all subscriptions must be in **UK pounds sterling**. Each subscription covers everyone at the same address, sharing the same copy of *Witheridge Times*.

Cheques should be made payable to The Witheridge Family History Society, and should be sent to the Membership Secretary at the address shown on the front cover of this issue. Subscriptions may also be paid via PayPal, using the Internet. Using PayPal takes care of any currency conversion. If you would like to pay your subscription via PayPal, please send an e-mail to Membership@WitheridgeFHS.com, asking for a PayPal payment request to be e-mailed back to you.

