

Witheridge

Family History Society

Newsletter

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Chairman's Message

Happy New Year! Many of our members have had a difficult year in 2016, with bereavement, accidents, illness and other personal concerns, as well as worries over global developments. However, the Christmas season (which, as I write this, we're still in), is a season of hope, and I trust all our members, and their families, will have a happy, healthy and peaceful 2017.

The Witheridge FHS has also faced many challenges in 2016. For most of the year we have been without a Secretary, and emergency plans to employ someone on a temporary basis fell through. Illness has affected other Committee Members, and our Membership Secretary Barbara Finemore retired on 31 December. There was also a major hitch in our plans for a Facebook page, but I'm happy to say that our new member, Paul Barber has kindly agreed to set this up for us in the New Year.

Our Hon President, Kim Cook has valiantly tried to cover some of the gaps, dealing with AGM and Committee business, and working on a Witheridge FHS *Newsletter*, while continuing to run her own business. Unfortunately, she has also been hit by illness, necessitating many hospital appointments and tests, followed by surgery in December and the prospect of further surgery and treatment in the new year. After months of struggling, she has managed to produce this *Newsletter* which, with all the Reunion, AGM, and Committee reports is inevitably considerably longer than usual. However, it's unlikely she'll be able to do any further work for WFHS in the near future.

We urgently need new Officers on the Committee, particularly a Secretary and someone who can produce a simple *Newsletter*. Both tasks require simple computer skills, but neither task is onerous, or particularly technical. Although Kim's used a desk-top publishing program for this issue, it's because she has one and is comfortable with using it, but it doesn't mean the *Newsletter* necessarily has to be produced that way. All that is needed is the ability to produce basic Word documents. I ask all of you to consider whether you could help us, even if only on a temporary basis.

The need is particularly urgent, as we are planning the Witheridge FHS 30th Birthday Celebrations! The first WFHS meeting took place in West Wickham, Kent on 1 May 1987, and we would like our 30th Birthday to be another special occasion. Provisionally, we're looking at the weekend of 20-21 May 2017, but could possibly change this to another weekend in May if this would make it easier for members to attend. We're hoping that many of our overseas members will be able to join us. The venue is yet to be confirmed, but check out the notice on page 6, and email your preferences to us asap, so that we can choose the region that most members prefer.

I look forward to hearing from all of you!

Jason Cook

29 December 2016

Family News



Congratulations!

Congratulations to **Liz and Chris Davey** (our Treasurer and Vice Chairman) on becoming grandparents for the second time. On Wednesday 25 May, their daughter Rebecca Johnson gave birth to Toby George Johnson, who weighed in at a respectable 8 lb 6 oz! Following Rebecca's difficult pregnancy, Toby's dad George, brother Ralph and proud grandparents are all delighted and relieved.

As Liz and Chris were on grandparent duty for a couple of weeks afterwards, it meant that they weren't able to join us for our Reunion and AGM, but there couldn't have been a better reason for their absence. We send our best wishes to all the family.

Life-saving in the West Country

Val Wells has written from Plymouth with some literally heart-warming news. 'My husband is Trustee Director of local cardiac charity HeartSWell South West and much of my time is taken up as his little helper! A lot of time recently has been involved with the charity's project of addressing applications for defibrillators (30 to date, at over £1,000 each) within communities, health clubs, other organisations etc, within south west. Sadly cardiac arrests are increasing. Recently, 29 Commando Royal Marines at Plymouth were shocked when one of their members (generally considered to be very fit) suffered cardiac arrest during the London Marathon, and they expressed a wish to support the charity. The charity has donated autopulse cardiac life saving devices (£10,000 each) to 3 hospitals to date:



Royal Devon & Exeter, Derriford Plymouth and Royal Duchy, Trelliske, Cornwall, as well as a £100,000 3D camera (images of heart via throat) in conjunction with British Heart

Foundation.'

This is a truly amazing achievement, and one that Val and her family can be truly proud of. If any of our West Country members would like to help with fundraising, please contact Val, either direct or through WFHS.

Bereavement

We were sorry to learn of the death, in Plympton on 14 May, of **Philip Witheridge**, brother of our Hon Vice-President, **Richard Witheridge** of Bath.

The parents of Philip and Richard were Henry Witheridge (of the Ermington branch) and Alice E Jenkins. Philip, who was 82, is survived by his wife Eileen, their daughter and son, and a grand-daughter. We send our condolences to all the family.

News from Biggin Hill

This has been a frustrating summer for **Roy and Kim Cook**. Just ten days after the AGM, Kim suddenly developed severe and painful eye problems. She was immediately referred as an emergency to the Moorfields Eye Unit, where a number of problems, including ulcerated cornea, were diagnosed.

Thanks to prompt treatment by the Moorfields team, the ulceration was cured in a matter of weeks, before there was any serious damage to Kim's sight. The remaining conditions are manageable, but that management involves restricting computer use. Each computer session has to be less than two hours, with a minimum two-hour break between sessions. As Kim works 18 hours a week, mostly on the computer, it leaves very little computer time

for WFHS and personal use.

A few weeks later, further frustration set in when Roy slipped on wet grass in the garden, and broke his fibula in three places! After a week in a back-slab, he was fitted with a full plaster, and offered a choice of colours. He promptly chose the children's one, decorated with paw-prints – hardly



Roy shows off his paw-print plaster!

surprising for someone known as a big kid! It was a great source of amusement for his many visitors. When the plaster came off, Roy then had to wear an air-cast boot for some weeks. He is now greatly relieved to be free of all walking aids at last, and able to drive and get back to work.

Congratulations! (2)

Congratulations to **Ethan Cook** on his 18th birthday in September! His parents (our Chairman **Jason** and his wife **Zoe**) laid on a surprise party for him, and it was a great evening, with a large crowd of family and friends. The venue was decorated with guitars (reflecting Ethan's current music studies), and photos of key events in his life. Among the many family members who enjoyed the celebrations were WFHS members **Roy and Kim Cook** (Ethan's grandparents, with Roy still wearing an air-cast boot!), and cousins **Brenda and Ron Dixon**.



Ethan cuts his number 1 cake at his 18th birthday party!

News from Canada

It was lovely to hear from **Kathy Witheridge** in Canada, with news of a recent mini-reunion in Upper New York State, when she and husband **Paul Witheridge** met up with **Paul and Beryl Witheridge** of Marlow, England, **Annette Witheridge** of New York, and **Anne and Jim Atwell** of Fly Creek, New York. Cathy writes as follows.

Early this year we learned that Paul and Beryl were travelling to NY State, and wanted to meet up with us. For their first two weeks, they had friends loan them a house in Serratoga Springs, NY. The owner of the house kindly agreed that we could spend some time there with Paul and Beryl, so we joined them for their second week in this beautiful house. We left Ontario on 23 September and spent the first night in Rochester, New York, as the journey was too long for Paul to drive in one day. We arrived with them on Sunday 24 September and stayed with them until the following Friday.

We'd alerted Annette that we'd be in Serratoga Springs for a week and she decided to get a train right into Serratoga Springs. Paul and Paul met her on the Tuesday and she stayed overnight at a Holiday Inn where she'd stayed previously. As we were quite close to Cooperstown, where Anne and Jim Atwell live, Anne decided to drive to Serratoga Springs on the Tuesday and stay with Annette at the Holiday Inn.

We had a wonderful time. I'd made a book for Annette on the part of her family that came to Canada. She'd only recently learned of this part of her family, so she was delighted to receive all the information. We had a nice dinner at the Holiday Inn, then Annette and Anne came to the house on Wednesday morning. Beryl made a beautiful lunch for all of us. Unfortunately Annette had to return home on Wednesday evening and Anne returned to Cooperstown.

On Friday afternoon, we travelled to Cooperstown and stayed in a motel for 3 nights. That evening we went out for a wonderful dinner with Anne and Jim. We were all delighted to visit with Jim as he has Parkinson's and Paul was anxious to talk to him as he too has Parkinson's.

We had a lovely visit with them and were sad to say our goodbyes on Monday morning. Paul and Beryl left for a tour of the Canadian eastern provinces and we left for home. It was great to see our friends again and it was a sad goodbye.



Paul (Canada), Beryl, Kathy, Annette, Anne and Paul (Marlow) in the garden in Serratoga Springs.

New Member

It is a great pleasure to welcome new member **Paul Barber**, who was warmly welcomed at our AGM and Reunion in Biggin Hill in June. Paul, who lives at 1 Hill Rise, Forest Hill, London SE23 3PG, is descended from **Ann Elizabeth Witheridge**, who was baptised on 10 November 1811 in Ivybridge, and is therefore part of our Ermington family.

The abridged family tree, shown opposite, show Paul's direct line of descent, and his relationship to our members **Valerie Wells**, **Barbara Finemore**, and **Richard Witheridge**, whose names are underlined on the tree. Unfortunately, it's not possible to show all related members on this small page, so I apologise to those Ermington descendents not shown on the tree. However, I suspect most will know where they fit in on this tree, and will be able to work out how they are related to Paul.

We hope Paul will enjoying finding out more about his Witheridge ancestry, and getting to know other members, whether related or not!

Reunion & AGM 2017

The provisional date for our annual Reunion and AGM is the weekend of 20-21 May 2017, but the venue has yet to be decided. There are six areas which have strong links, past and/or present with our Witheridge families. These are:

- 1 **Devon** Ancestral links for most members, but few current links;
- 2 **Kent** Ancestral links for one branch, and some current;
- 3 **Greater London** Ancestral links for 3 branches and many current links;
- 4 **East Anglia** Few ancestral links, but many current links;
- 5 **Midlands** Ancestral links for 2 branches and many current links;
- 6 **South Wales** Ancestral links for two branches and some current links. Please

email by 5 February 2017, indicating whether you hope to be attending and, if you plan to be with us, rank 3 of the 6 suggested areas in order of your preference. We will then evaluate the replies, and choose a venue which suits most of those planning to attend. Full details of venue and programme will then be emailed to all members.

Please note that anyone with a Witheridge connection is welcome to join our reunion, as long as we are notified in advance, with full details including name, address and family connection. Those attending are invited to bring family documents, photos and memorabilia, and we hope to be able to answer any queries those attending may have about their ancestors. There will be a small charge for non-members. However, only current paid-up members are eligible to participate in the AGM.

abridged

Ermington Family Tree

Arthur Witheridge = Elizabeth Bowden
b1758 E | bc1762
m1787E |
d1848E |

Elizabeth 1) = William = 2) Mary Philip = Mary Robert = Ann Henry = Betsy
Osborne | Bowden | Wills b1791E | Northmore b1793E | Light b1793E | Ryder
| b1789E | | m1828E | bc1804 | | | Coleman
| d1861 | | d1872E | | | |

Abel* Ann E = James Philip = Jane Philip = Sarah issue issue
B1809K b1811I | Barber Bowden | Ann b1831E | H Ford
m1831P | b1811 b1818 Pl | Netherton m1857 | b1834E
| | d m1840S | | d |

4 Emily = James George = Emily Thirza = Samuel Philip = Rhoda A
Dau Ann | William Thomas | Ellen Ann | Dawson Henry | Munford
Martin | b1840P b1840Pl | Attrill b1844Pl | b1844Pl b1873E |
b1842P | m1862P m1864Pl | b1848J m1865Pl | d1916Pl |
d1894Pl | d1894Pl d1919Pl |

Ellen E = John Henry = Emily Laura E = Samuel Alice E 1) = Henry = Lilian A
Arscott | Charles Albert | Ellen Pearce | Henry Jenkins | b1902E |
| b1868P White | b1877Pl b1883Pl | b1881W b | m1927E |
| m1892C b1871B | m1897Pl d1918Pl | m1904Pl d1935 | m1945 |
| d1950C |

Frances = Edward Emily = Henry Iris E = Leonard Philip Richard Stuart
Marie | Fredk Ellen | Albert Dawson | F R Richard Henry Charles
Slatter | Barber b1877Pl | White b1910Pl | Johnson b1934E b1935E b 1949
B1903 | b1902 m1897Pl | b1871B m1940Pl | d2016 m
D2000 | m1931 d | d2010Pl |

Mary T = John John = Elsie Barbara = Terry
Cassidy | Edward Northmore | Mary M Finemore
| Barber |

Paul Barber

Valerie (Wells)

Key: B= Bridestowe C= Camberwell E = Ermington I=Ivybridge J= Jersey, CI
K= Kingston nr Ivybridge P = Portsea Pl = Plymouth S= E Stonehouse
W=Cardiff, Wales *issue in Birmingham

Joyce Rose Browne
19 April 1923 - 8 April 2016

A tribute by Kim Cook

With the death of **Joyce Browne** (née Witheridge), the Witheridge FHS has lost not only its most staunch supporter, but also its greatest friend. Before the Society was officially formed, Joyce was keen to see the founding of the Witheridge FHS, and she and her husband Graham wanted to do all they could to ensure the success of our Society. Over the years, between them Joyce and Graham held many key posts in the Society, and in 2003 Joyce was made an Honorary Vice-President.



Joyce was the only child of Arthur Harry Witheridge (1892-1970) of the Ermington branch, and his wife Violet May Rose. Joyce's early life in Luton was modest. Following his action in WW1, her father suffered life-long respiratory problems which limited his promotion prospects at work. Careful management was needed to ensure that the budget saw them through the week. Joyce remembered childhood Friday afternoons, when she and her mother would wait for her father to come home, bearing his pay packet, plus a loaf of bread, margarine and jam, so they had something to eat for their tea!

At school Joyce did exceptionally well. Her junior school report states:

I recommend her highly for exceptional ability, industry, character and personality. There is no girl for whose education I have been responsible, in whom I have more confidence.

Although Joyce passed the exam for High School, her parents couldn't afford to send her there, and she went instead to a local secondary school. Here she excelled, both academically and at sport, being a good team player, excellent athlete, and winning medals at inter-school sports. Her final school report reads:

'From the first she has shown herself to be a pupil of outstanding merit. She is quick to learn, her knowledge, thought, understanding and appreciation of Literature and History, are in advance of her years, and she has a very unusual ability in writing. Her English work is constructive, imaginative and alive. She has an attractive personality and her character and conduct are excellent. I strongly recommend her for the post for which she is applying, and have entire confidence in her will and ability to succeed.'

Joyce's working life was spent almost entirely with children. When she left school at 14, she went to work in a children's clinic, where she stayed for many years until she discovered that she was being paid less than men in subordinate roles, and her employers were not prepared to remedy this. Joyce's next role was as a teacher of office practice and commercial subjects. Although she had no formal qualifications, her practical experience in these subjects made her an excellent teacher, even when faced with recalcitrant would-be drop-outs!

Joyce was an accomplished accordionist, playing in several groups and entertaining 8th Army troops before their departure for North Africa, for which the CO sent her a letter of thanks. Joyce had tried, with a friend, to sign on in the Wrens (Women's Royal Naval Service), but there was only one vacancy and, as both candidates were excellent, selection was done alphabetically. Witheridge stood no chance! Thus Joyce joined the ARP (Air Raid Precautions) with her friend Vera, and soon found herself witnessing the first bomb to drop on Luton, crawling into bombed houses, and helping to assess casualties. She had to ensure that diagnosis and treatment details were conveyed safely and accurately



Joyce and Graham Browne on their wedding day, in 1945.

to ambulance staff at the local hospital – achieved by using a medical code, written in lipstick on the foreheads of the casualties!

In her early days at the clinic, while taking the weekly mail to the Town Hall, Joyce met Graham Browne, then a local authority clerk. Love blossomed, and even Graham's RAF posting during WW2 was no deterrent! When they married in 1945, Joyce was left anxiously waiting for Graham to arrive home on leave, but his travel had been delayed, and he arrived only just in time for the wedding!

Although Graham wasn't demobilised until 1947, his last posting was at the Air Ministry in London, so they were able to live with Joyce's parents in Luton. They stayed there until 1955, by which time they had saved to buy their own home. During that time Joyce became pregnant with a much-longed for child. Sadly, poor treatment in a local hospital led, not only to the loss of their child, but also to Joyce's inability to have further children. With typical generosity, Joyce and Graham diverted their love of children to the children of others, always showing a remarkable degree of thought and understanding.

During their 62 years of marriage, Joyce and Graham shared many interests, and compromised on others. Joyce shared Graham's interest in his Norfolk ancestry, but was less enthusiastic about his fascination with Lord Nelson. Graham had a phobia of churchyards, and Joyce was never a cricket fan, so when Joyce went searching for graves, Graham sat in their car, listening to Test Matches (when in progress) on the radio, or admiring the view in the other direction! The same went for Joyce's many visits to Plymouth Record Office.

However, when it came to the Witheridge FHS, Graham and Joyce were totally united in their enthusiasm and commitment. Both served on our Committee, with Graham as Chairman and Joyce as Editor from 1991 until 2003. Until health issues interfered, they never missed a Witheridge AGM or Reunion, and regularly opened their home for other Witheridge gatherings. Although WFHS business was always taken seriously, there were fun times too, with competitions which Joyce and Graham entered with great enthusiasm. One of the most memorable was the hat competition of 1992, when members were invited to bring a hat linked to a story from their family history. Graham brought an imposing helmet



Joyce and Graham's wholehearted support for the Witheridge FHS was always evident at our Reunions. Here, they are wearing their entries to our 1992 Hat Competition. Joyce made a poke bonnet, while Graham sported a plumed helmet of the Imperial Norfolk Yeomanry.

of the Imperial Norfolk Yeomanry, while Joyce made a poke bonnet to illustrate the tale (told again in the Spring 2011 issue of *TWT*) of her 3x great aunt, Elizabeth Cassell Witheridge.

During times when the Society's finances were slim, Joyce and Graham regularly made generous anonymous donations, frequently

covering the cost of hall hire and refreshments for Witheridge events.

Over the years Joyce worked, often with other members, on many Witheridge research projects. Joyce, Richard Witheridge, and I had all transcribed GRO registers, as well as many census returns, parish registers and other records, and were able to combine these to form the beginnings of a research archive that has been invaluable in helping many of our members find their true ancestry. Joyce continued to be an avid researcher, adding a tremendous amount to our research archive. She also wrote many informative and fascinating articles for *The Witheridge Times*, often illustrated with her own sketches.

Following Graham's death in August 2007, Joyce found it impossible to live with the memories in the beautiful home she had shared for many years with Graham. A year later, she moved just a couple of miles to a modern retirement complex where she had a small but comfortable flat, with no worries about maintenance, and could enjoy the communal gardens. Other friends, including two sisters she had known for many years, were already in residence, and Joyce was warmly welcomed.

In addition to normal resident facilities, the complex was also able to offer nursing care when needed. This proved a great boon when, in 2009, Joyce was diagnosed with breast cancer. In November that year Joyce, then aged 86, underwent a double mastectomy, which she faced with remarkable stoicism. The operation was followed, early in 2010, by a course of radiotherapy, involving a long round-trip journey to a specialist hospital every weekday for three weeks. Her patience and fortitude were amazing. More recently Joyce had suffered from loss of short-term memory, although she remained more than capable of holding lively conversations on anything from politics to family history.

In her final months, following a broken hip resulting in a number of strokes, Joyce became increasingly disabled. She died in Luton & Dunstable Hospital on 8 April 2016, and is sorely missed by the many who came to know and love her.

Roy and I attended her funeral as both representatives of WFHS and friends who loved her dearly. Also there were former WFHS members Paul and Beryl Witheridge of Marlow, who had remained close and supportive friends.

My thanks to Paul & Beryl for the photo on page 8, and to Graham's nephew David Browne, and members of Joyce's Christadelphian church, for additional details of Joyce's life. KC

Allan Witheridge

8 March 1926 - 29 March 2016

Allan Witheridge, son of Wiliam Witheridge and Rose Innes, was born in Nowra, NSW, on 8 March 1926. His grandfather, Philemon Thomas Witheridge, had been born in England, and grew up in Cornwall, where he became a fisherman. Soon after his 1872 marriage to Mary Jane Carvath, the couple emigrated, living first in Shoalhaven and later in Nowra. Allan's father William was one of five siblings, and he and Rose had six children. Allan, his brothers Bill, Tom, Jack and Philemon (aka Toby), with sister Alma, grew up in a community full of Witheridges!

Allan met Judith Rolfe at Nowra Methodist Church in 1951/2, and they married on 20 February 1954. Both were involved in many local organisations, in what was called a four-square lifestyle – worship, fellowship, sport, and social activities. Judith's father, Ted Rolfe, had known Allan for some time, as Allan played rugby for the local team where Ted assisted the coach. Allan was also an A-grade tennis player and cricketer. Indeed, all the Witheridge boys were fine sportsmen and Alma a first-class tennis player.

At school, Allan was a good student, despite having to help his father in the family fishing business on the Shoalhaven river, and being woken at any time, depending on the tides. After High School, he went into partnership with his father, insisting that he kept the books. The partnership continued until an unfortunate accident to William meant that their trawler had to be sold to their uncle Jacob, and Allan had to find other employment. He applied to work for the railway company, where his brother Tom worked, but having passed all the exams with 100%, he was found to be colour-blind. Allan then found a good job as a driver with the Shell Oil Company (Royal Dutch Shell), which was then a benevolent employer, and remained so to Allan for the rest of his working life. In 1951, Shell sent Allan to New Guinea, to refuel DC3 aircraft, and he didn't return until almost a year later, when he met Judith.

In the early years of their marriage, Allan and Judith lived in Nowra, before moving to Mudgee in the central west of NSW, where their sons Greig, Neil and Ian were born. In 1963 Shell moved them to Port Kembla, and the family moved to the Wollongong suburb of Figtree, only 50 miles from their childhood home. This was a happy move, and here their fourth son, Paul, was born. Later Judith taught for 25 happy years in a suburban school. They continued to live in Figtree until shortly before Allan's death.

Allan and Judith travelled extensively at every opportunity, both overseas and throughout Australia, and have wonderful memories (and photos!) to look back on. Among the highlights was their visit to the 10th Anniversary of the WFHS.

Family has always been immensely important for the Nowra Witheridges, and as Allan and Judith's sons grew up and married, the family grew, with 4 daughters-in-law and 9 grandchildren. It was a source of great joy that none of them lived further than 1½ hour's drive away.

At Allan's funeral, the boys reflected on their many happy memories of their Dad. Among Greig's earliest memories were the occasions when he and Neil were taken on delivery trips in their Dad's big truck, going from Mudgee to

Runing Stream or Dunnedoo, with lunch in the park. On overseas holidays, Allan sought out places linked with Shell and had photos taken at a variety of Shell properties, including the company headquarters in Rotterdam. Greig also recalled trips to Nowra to visit family, with the four boys in the back seat of the FB Holden wagon, with no seat-belts.

The boys were brought up in the Methodist Church in Unanderra, where Allan and Judith were active members. Neil particularly remembers his Dad's strong Christian faith, with biblical moral values, and a tough love approach that gave them secure and supported teenage years. On one occasion, when youth club members were being harassed by a group of local thugs, Allan gave chase, grabbed the ring-leader by the scruff of the neck, and gave him a severe warning as he frog-marched him around the church to the gate. Strong and fit, Allan was not someone the youngster wanted to tangle with again!

Ian paid tribute to his Dad's diligence and strong work ethic, recalling how his Union leaders were unhappy, as he worked too quickly! Thereafter, to ensure he took the full time allocated for his trip, Allan would often pull over to the side of the road and take a nap! On one occasion at the height of the 1968 bush fires, Allan's arrival at a fire site with a petrol tanker had the firefighters running for cover, only to emerge sheepishly when they saw a water sign on the back! Ian also recalled his Dad's love of d-i-y, particularly anything involving sand, cement and gravel. Only recently, while at a Bunnings hardware and d-i-y warehouse, Allan disappeared, and was eventually found next to the car, with a sales assistant, a trolley and a bag of cement for patching cracks in brickwork!

Paul also remembered the way his Dad transformed the family home at Figtree, with significant construction, drainage and landscaping works that were truly feats of engineering. They were also the means of disposing of unwanted bicycles, appliances and even antiques, which will doubtless give future archeologists a fascinating insight into 20th-century Witheridge life! Paul also paid tribute to his Dad's thirst for knowledge, and his insistence on the correct use of words. A thick, red Webster's dictionary was for many years a constant companion. Novels were of no interest to Allan - he wanted to learn about the real world. This included a layman's guide to medical complaints which, to a natural pessimist about health matters, was often a source of alarm.

All Allan's sons recalled his unwavering generosity, paying college fees, providing a car to avoid motorbike risks, and constantly encouraging his children. They spoke with affection of his softening in later years as he gladly embraced the role of Poppy to his nine grandchildren. With extreme patience and love he had a remarkable ability to both entertain and calm them.

From 2006 until 2013, Allan and Judith were WFHS Australia Representatives. They hosted annual Reunions, often welcoming 30 or more (including some from other branches of the Witheridge family). They regularly wrote warm and lively letters describing the lives of their family, and *TWT* readers felt a personal link. However, in recent years Allan's health had caused concern, with a bout of encephalitis, and a quadruple heart by-pass. Allan passed away peacefully in the Palliative Care Unit, at the Port Kembla Hospital.

Allan and Judith have been greatly loved, and Alan will be hugely missed. We send our condolences to Judith, their four sons and 9 grandchildren.

Annual Reunion

4 June 2016,
St Mark's Centre
Biggin Hill, Kent



It was a small but friendly group that gathered at St Mark's Centre on the morning of Saturday 4 June. **Kim and Roy Cook** had arrived early to set things up in a pleasant room with comfortable fireside-style chairs around a long central table. Labels showing the way to the room had been put up, the urn was on, and refreshments, including the traditional Witheridge FHS birthday cake, had been set out. As Roy left to collect **Alison Smith** and her son **Philip Milnes-Smith** from Bickley Station, **Brenda and Ron Dixon** arrived.



*Celebrating 29 years
of WFHS!*

A few minutes later we were surprised when a stranger walked in. When greeted, he said his name was **Paul Barber**, and that he had a Witheridge great-grandmother. He'd checked the web-site of the Guild of One-Names Studies for all his ancestral names, but had found only one – Witheridge – and wanted to join us in the hope of finding out more about Ann Eliza Witheridge, who had been born c 1811! Immediately he was no longer a stranger, but a member of our extended family, and was warmly welcomed and plied with refreshments!

For the first time in 29 years, Kim hadn't brought her files and card indexes with her – Murphy's law! Although she had a fair idea of who this Ann Eliza might be, Kim couldn't immediately give a positive identity for her, or the family she came from, but promised to do so as soon as possible. (She did, within 24 hours!) By the time Roy had returned with Alison and Philip, and Jason had also joined us, Paul was a fully paid-up member, and was therefore able to make a welcome contribution to our AGM discussions.

Our only regret was that Paul wasn't able to stay with us for our meal in The Old Jail pub. This lovely historic building had probably been the home of a local Justice or Constable at one time. Inside there had been a secure room set aside as a jail for prisoners awaiting transfer either to court, or to another parish – hence its name. More recently,



The Old Jail, Biggin Hill.

it had been a watering-hole for airmen from nearby RAF Biggin Hill (now closed), and particularly for many of the Battle of Britain pilots from WW2. The pub has a lovely interior with original old timbers and large fireplaces, combined with a plethora of aeronautical memorabilia, as well as an excellent menu.

We all took typical Witheridge enjoyment in a delicious leisurely meal with plenty of convivial conversation! Afterwards, the Witheridge cake was duly cut by our Chairman, Jason but, as most of us were well replete, we took our portions of cake home with us!

Our time together was all too short, and as Brenda and Ron, and Jason, headed for their respective homes, Alison and Philip joined Roy and Kim at their home for coffee and more chat, before being driven back to Philip's home.



Despite the small gathering, we had members of three different branches of the Witheridge family with us – Bradworthy, Ermington and Wembury. We'd really enjoyed ourselves, and all expressed the hope that next year, our 30th Anniversary, we'll be able to enjoy a much larger gathering, with all major branches of the family represented.

Chairman Jason cuts the traditional Witheridge birthday cake.



Ron Dixon, Brenda Dixon, Kim Cook, Alison Smith, Philip Milnes-Smith, and Roy Cook at the Old Jail.

Subscription Reminder

Subscriptions for 2017 become due on 1 January. All members should now have received a personal reminder from our new Membership Secretary, Geoff Shingler, including details of payment methods. However, if any of you have overlooked your renewal, please send your your payment as soon as possible, with an email to Geoff confirming your payment and the method used. Once your renewal has been received, our Web-master Bill Dwyne will be notified, and you will then receive the new password for the 'Members' Only' section of our WFHS web-site. We are gradually adding more information and photos to this section of the web-site, so don't miss out on access to this.

Witheridge Family History Society

Minutes of the 2016 Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Witheridge Family History Society, was held at the St Mark's Centre, Church Road, Biggin Hill, Westerham, Kent, and opened at 10.30 am.

Present: Jason Cook, Roy Cook, Kim Cook, Alison Smith, Philip Milnes-Smith, Brenda Dixon, Ron Dixon, and Paul Barber.

Absentee Voters: Votes were received from 11 absentee voters

1 Chairman's opening and welcome

Chairman **Jason Cook** opened the meeting, pointing out that this was in fact our 30th Reunion, after 29 years of the WFHS. He welcomed all those who attended, and particularly new member **Paul Barber**, who had come equipped with completed membership form (downloaded from the Internet), and a crisp £10 note! Jason had long felt the need for new, younger faces, as for some time we've had an increasingly elderly Committee. Some had already announced their intention to step down, but because of a shortage of candidates, had been persuaded to stay on. However, he emphasised that we can't expect them to go on forever, and the time has therefore come for other members to step forward and be more involved with the running of the Society. Jason warned that unless we do have more volunteers in the coming year, our next AGM & Reunion, when we're planning a special 30th Anniversary celebration, could turn out to be our final one, with the Society being wound up. He was sure this is not something any of us wish to see, so told members that, if we want to continue to enjoy the Society, they must step up to the plate and help to make it work.

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence, with good wishes, were received from **Julia Crocker, Liz & Chris Davey, Barbara & Terry Finemore, Catherine & Geoff Shingler, Rob & Cathy Staples, Val Wells, Annette Witheridge, Jim Witheridge, and Sue Witheridge.**

3 Minutes of the 2015 AGM held at SP2 Centre, Salisbury, Wiltshire

As some of those present had not seen the minutes, these were read through by Jason. One or two minor corrections were made, and these will be incorporated into the official minutes held as a record of the 2015 AGM.

4 Matters arising from these Minutes

There were no further matters arising from these minutes.

5 Matters arising from Officers' Reports

A number of issues had arisen, but all would be dealt with under specific headings later in the meeting.

6 Election of Officers and Committee Members

As in all AGMs since absentee voting was first introduced, absentee votes were not counted until votes of those present had been cast. In this, and subsequent proposals requiring a vote, numbers are shown with votes of those present first, + absentee votes, followed by totals.

Chairman Jason Cook

Proposed by: Ron Dixon; Seconded by: Alison Smith

Votes For: 8+11 =19 Against: 0 Abstained 0

Vice Chairman Chris Davey

Proposed by: Kim Cook; Seconded by: Jason Cook

Votes For: 8+11 =19 Against: 0 Abstained 0

Secretary

No nominations were received prior to, or during, the meeting, so no vote could be taken. The Chairman then reminded the meeting of Item 9, when the possible employment of a part-time secretary would be discussed and voted on. The meeting unanimously thanked our retiring Secretary, **Beth Neilly**, for all the hard work she had done as Secretary for the Society during the past four years.

Membership Secretary Barbara Finemore

(until 31.12.2016) Proposed by: Beth Neilly; Seconded by: Liz Davey

Votes For: 7+9 =16 Against: 0 Abstained 1+2 =3

(from 01.01.2017)

No nominations were received prior to, or during, the meeting, so no vote could be taken. It was agreed unanimously that this appointment be deferred for further discussion by the Committee later in the year, by which time they would have updated information on membership, including new members, and could then consider possible candidates for co-opting before 31.12.2016.

Treasurer

Liz Davey

Proposed by: Jason Cook; Seconded by: Brenda Dixon

Votes For: 8+11 =19 Against: 0 Abstained 0

Assistant Treasurer Chris Davey

Proposed by: Kim Cook; Seconded by: Ron Dixon

Votes For: 8+11 =19 Against: 0 Abstained 0

Editor and Publisher No nominations were received prior to, or during, the meeting, so no vote could be taken.

It was agreed unanimously that this should be deferred for further discussion by the Committee in the near future, by which time they would have updated information on membership, including new members, and could then consider possible candidates for co-opting. Kim said she hoped that the appointment of a new Secretary would be

approved later in the meeting, and completed very soon. In that case, as an interim measure, she would be willing to provide material for the next WFHS Newsletter, for the new Secretary to distribute. The meeting unanimously thanked our retiring Newsletter Editor, **Beth Neilly**, for all the hard work she had done in producing Newsletters for the Society since 2014.

Facebook Moderator Rebekah Carlson

Proposed by: Kim Cook; Seconded by: Beth Neilly
Votes For: 8+11 =19 Against: 0 Abstained 0

Research Co-ordinator Kim Cook

Proposed by: Brenda Dixon;
Seconded by: Catherine Shingler
Votes For: 8+11 =19 Against: 0 Abstained 0

Webmaster

Bill Dwyne

Proposed by: Kim Cook; Seconded by: Brenda Dixon
Votes For: 8+11 =19 Against: 0 Abstained 0

Committee Members Pamela Glynn

Proposed by: Beth Neilly; Seconded by: Alison Smith
Votes For: 8+11 =19 Against: 0 Abstained 0

Roy Cook

Proposed by: Ron Dixon; Seconded by: Catherine Shingler
Votes For: 8+11 =19 Against: 0 Abstained 0

Alison Smith

Proposed by: Liz Davey; Seconded by: Roy Cook
Votes For: 8+11 =19 Against: 0 Abstained 0

The Chairman declared that all those nominated had been duly elected.

7 Overseas Representatives

Jennifer and Richard Woolcott have agreed to continue as the Society's Australian Representatives, and the Society is delighted to accept their offer. Thanks were recorded to Jennifer and Richard for their support during the past year, and their willingness to continue. **Jim Witheridge** was also thanked for his willingness to act, on a trial basis, as our new representative for the USA.

8 Appointment of Auditor

Janice Cawsey was thanked for acting as our Auditor last year and, in accordance with our custom, was given a thank-you gift, in the form of a garden voucher. She was also thanked for agreeing to continue as Auditor.

9 WFHS Secretary

As no nomination was received for the post of Secretary, there was a need to appoint someone to do the work for us, until such time as a volunteer Secretary can be co-opted. We have more than sufficient finance in our funds

to cover payment of at least £350.00, to keep the Society running efficiently for a few months. In accordance with Section 4.3 of the Constitution, the person appointed would be made an Honorary Member for the duration of the appointment, and would therefore be subject to all the rules of membership, but not eligible to vote. During that time, The Secretary would be expected to deal with essential correspondence, and to work with the Committee in producing a regular newsletter and in encouraging the membership recruitment. A possible candidate was mentioned, and will be approached at the earliest opportunity.

Proposal: To appoint a paid Secretary, not currently Society member, to support the Committee until such time as a volunteer Secretary can be found within the Society. The initial budget for this would be £350.00 over a period of a few months, with the person appointed made an Honorary Member for the duration of the appointment.

Proposed by: Jason Cook; Seconded by: Ron Dixon

Votes For: 8+8 =16 Against: 0 Abstained 0+3 =3 The

Chairman declared the proposal carried.

10 Facebook Page

The general opinion was that this was an excellent idea, and would attract the younger generation - much needed if the Society is to thrive. A quick check of current Facebook members showed that there are literally hundreds with the surname Witheridge, and undoubtedly hundreds more with maternal Witheridge ancestry. It was emphasised that the Society would set its own privacy levels for the page. The meeting expressed thanks to **Rebekah Carlson** for agreeing to be our Facebook Moderator. Rebekah will monitor all new postings to ensure that nothing inappropriate is posted. It is hoped that she and other Society Members can encourage those who post messages to consider joining the Society.

Proposal: To set up as soon as possible, and maintain, a Facebook page in the name of the Witheridge Family History Society.

Proposed by: Beth Neilly; Seconded by: Jason Cook

Votes For: 8+9 =16 Against: 0 Abstained 0+2 =2 The

Chairman declared the proposal carried.

11 Future of WFHS

It was noted that membership renewals had fallen off considerably during the previous two years. However, in the month before the AGM, reminders had been sent out to those who had not yet renewed for 2016, and as a result, a number of additional renewals had been received. Although membership was still lower than at any time prior to 2014, those present felt the outlook is now much brighter, particularly with the Facebook page due to come online. It was noted that although a number of Family History Societies are in decline, those with Facebook pages appear to be thriving. It was also agreed by all present that we need to be more pro-active concerning both new membership and renewals. The general outlook of all those present was very positive.

The meeting agreed unanimously that this matter be deferred for further discussion by the Committee once the Facebook page had been up and running for a while.

12 WFHS Christmas Card for 2016

No ideas had been proposed prior to the meeting. **Kim Cook** asked **Alison Smith** whether her grand-daughter **Hannah Shingler**, who had produced an excellent design for last year's card, would be prepared to design this year's card. Alison felt sure that Hannah would be delighted to do this, and agreed to pass on the request to Hannah and her mother, **Catherine Shingler**. If Hannah agrees to do this, a decision on the final design would be made by the Committee by 30 September 2016.

13 Date and venue for 2017 Reunion

As this will be our 30th Anniversary, it was hoped that this could be a big event, over two days. Dates proposed at last year's AGM were 20-21 May. However, with the postponement of this year's AGM, we have a wider option on dates. It was felt that it would not be wise to make a firm decision on date or venue at this time, but that we should wait until we have a better idea of new members, their locations, and their personal circumstances, and then take these factors into account before making a decision. Those present agreed that proposed dates should avoid Bank Holidays, and that the preferred location should be somewhere with a strong Witheridge family link, preferably in Devon. Venue proposals should be in by 30 September 2016, with a Committee decision by 31 October 2016 at latest. The meeting agreed unanimously to refer this to the Committee.

14 Any other business

This included items introduced both by those present, and by absentee members who had responded to our request for their input.

- a Web-site password. This was designed to be changed every year so that members who don't renew don't have continued access to information they haven't paid for. A new password was agreed for this year, to be implemented, say, on 30 June 2016. This will give **Bill Dwyne** time to change it, and for confirmed members to be notified prior to that date. New members will receive password when they join. Password for 2017, to be implemented on 1 February 2017, will be decided by 31 October this year, so that members can be sent new password with 2017 membership receipt.
- b Pedigree information. Any request for pedigree information, whether by members, or by Committee members, must be directed in the first instance to the Research Co-ordinator (currently **Kim Cook**), who will either supply it if we have it, or obtain it discreetly.
- c History of WFHS. This needs to be included in website, with details of prime researchers, ie Hon President and Hon Vice-Presidents, with dates of former Hon Vice-Presidents now deceased, but no dates for living ones. This will give due recognition to those no longer with us, or now retired, whose research work has been, and continues to be, the backbone of the

Society. It is hoped that this will encourage the Committee and general membership to give research, and its distribution, the prominence it has had in the past.

- d Honorary Membership. Members are reminded that Honorary Membership may be conferred only by decision of the Committee, in accordance with Paragraph 4.3 of our Constitution. An Honorary title of President or Vice-President may be awarded only in accordance with Paragraph 6.16 of the Constitution. No individual can make such a decision.
- e Accounts. The Chairman, **Jason Cook**, was puzzled by odd amounts shown in WFHS income. It was suggested that more detail showing how income was derived, would help. This had been done in the past, and it was agreed that the previous format be shown to the Treasurer as an example.
- f Membership. In recent years many members have fallen by the wayside because they have simply forgotten to renew. It was suggested that all members be sent a form for standing order/direct debit, so that we receive more automatic renewals and therefore sustain membership levels more easily.
- g Research information. Chairman **Jason Cook** read out the text of a response from an absentee member to our request for ideas and suggestions. (Interestingly, some of the views expressed were shared by the member who suggested item 14 c.) The writer felt that we have lost track of one of the Society's main objectives – that of researching, and then interpreting the research, and publishing it to give members easy access, and that we need to move forward now, and put this into practice. The absentee member added that the huge amount of information we have needs to be catalogued, collated, interpreted, and published. The writer stated that **Kim Cook** had put in an enormous amount of time, money and work into research over the years, and that we should use the money in the bank to pay Kim for the upcoming work involved in collating the stored material, ready for publication for members. If we don't do this, we'll end up with a room full of papers, files and documents that nobody can interpret.

Those present agreed that the Society has lost sight of its original aims as set out in Item 3 of the Constitution. It was also agreed that we hold a huge amount of information which needs to be collated and made available to members, and that this needs to be done while those who hold it are still with us. This will be a mammoth task, beyond what it is reasonable to expect on a voluntary basis, and the meeting agreed that the Society should use money in the bank to pay for the stored information to be collated in a manner that will make it more easily accessible by members.

- h Committee communication. From some of the items raised during the meeting, it was apparent that communication between Committee members had deteriorated during the past year, and that this needs to be addressed.

- i 30th Anniversary. It was agreed that much needs to be made of this in advance, and that it should be well promoted on the web-site and on Facebook. It was pointed out that our new member had arrived as a result of visiting the GoONS web-site, being directed from there to the Witheridge FHS site, and then the seeing the AGM update. As he lives within a fairly short distance of the meeting venue, he decided to come to the AGM, complete with downloaded application, and membership fee. This was seen as a good example of what happens when we have a recognisable Internet presence, of which Facebook should be a part, as it is a key communication tool among the younger generations. The Facebook page should also include the Society's objectives (Para 3.1-3.6 of constitution), in more informal, friendly language.

As matters agreed under AOB are not binding without the agreement of the Committee, it was unanimously agreed by those present that all items discussed under Any Other Business should be referred to the new Committee for discussion and decision as soon as possible after the AGM.

The Chairman then closed the meeting at 12.30 pm. He thanked all those who had attended, and those who had contributed by absentee voting, and/or by submitting ideas for future conduct of the Society.

Research Update

For decades I've been collating my own research to try to make a coherent record of the thousands of pieces of Witheridge information gathered over 55 years. In the process, I've developed a format which I call Enhanced Narrative Pedigree (ENP), designed and colour-coded to make the family branches easier to understand. I've now produced ENPs for almost all the different branches of Witheridge and Wetheridge families, and these are regularly updated.

From time to time, sections of some of these ENPs have been published in *The Witheridge Times*, but as it's not been possible to publish updates recently, many WFHS members may be unaware of just how much information I've collated on the various Witheridge families.

Currently I have very extensive ENPs on the most prolific main branches, including Berrynarbor and Combmartin in North Devon, Ermington and Wembury in South Devon, and the Kent-Birmingham and London Highgate branches. Other branches and sub-branches on which I have a quite extensive ENPs include Barnstaple, Bradworthy, Bridgwater, Bristol, Plymouth, and Tavistock, with extensions to Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and the USA. I also have extensive ENPs on various branches across the South Hams of Devon, as well as various families in Australia whose UK origins are as yet unclear.

If any WFHS members would like me to search for information on their own branch of the family, please email me (witheridge1987@gmail.com), and I'll be happy to help.

Kim Cook

Minutes of WFHS Committee Meeting

4-8 June 2016

In accordance with our current practice, a Committee Meeting was held immediately after the AGM. The meeting was opened by the Chairman, Jason Cook at 12.35 pm on Saturday 4 June.

Present: Jason Cook (Chairman), Kim Cook (Research Co-ordinator), Alison Smith, and Roy Cook (Committee Members).

Apologies for Absence: Liz Davey (Treasurer), Chris Davey (Vice Chairman and Assistant Treasurer), Bill Dwyne (Web-master), and Barbara Finemore (Membership Secretary).

The Chairman opened by noting that, as there were only 4 Committee Members present, this did not constitute a physical quorum. He then invoked Paragraph 6.9 of the WFHS Constitution, which reads as follows:

Taking into account the wide geographical spread of Society members, a Committee meeting may consist of one or more of the following: a physical meeting of Committee members, a conference via telephone (including calls placed via the Internet) or an exchange of e-mails. The Chairman will set a time limit for completion of any such meeting and the Secretary will be responsible for collecting the votes submitted by committee members and submitting the results to the Chairman. After approval by the Chairman, the Secretary will then declare the results in writing to all committee members.

It was also noted that, in accordance with Paragraph 2 of the Constitution, when there is no Secretary, the Hon President should receive the votes and declare the results in writing to all Committee Members. Additionally, although Overseas Representatives do not have a vote, their input should be included in the discussion, and they should be advised about any decisions to be taken.

In accordance with these provisions, the Chairman, having opened the meeting, declared that it would continue to be open, and that Committee Members and Overseas Representatives be advised of this as promptly as possible. Discussion, and any consequent submission of proposals, will be open until 6.00 pm (BST) on Tuesday 7 June 2016, and voting will close on 6.00 pm (BST) on Wednesday 8 June 2016.

The items on the Committee Meeting Agenda are

- 1 Item 11 from the AGM Agenda - **Future of the Society**
- 2 Item 13 from the AGM Agenda - **Date and Venue for 2017 AGM & Reunion**
- 3 Item 14 from the AGM Agenda - **Any Other Business**, to include all items listed under that heading.

Committee members were duly advised on 5 June of these arrangements, and the results from those who voted are as follows.

- 1 **Future of the Society:** Those present at the AGM felt the outlook is now much brighter and very positive, particularly with the Facebook page coming online. It was noted at the AGM that although a number of Family History Societies are in decline, those with Facebook pages appear to be thriving.

It was also felt that we need to be more pro-active concerning both new membership and renewals.

Proposal: That we should to have a Facebook page and be more pro-active concerning both new membership and renewals.

Votes cast: For: 6 Against: 0 Abstain: 1 The Chairman declared the proposal carried.

- 2 **Date and venue for 2017:** As this will be our 30th Anniversary, those at the AGM hoped that this could be a big event, over two days. Dates proposed at last year's AGM were 20-21 May. However, with the postponement of this year's AGM, we have a wider option on dates. It was felt that it would be unwise to make a firm decision on date or venue at the AGM, but to wait until we have a better idea of new members, their situations (eg, work, etc) and locations, and then let the Committee choose, taking these factors into account. The AGM recommended that venue proposals be sent to the Secretary by 30 September 2016, with Committee decision by 31 October 2016 at latest. The AGM agreed that dates should avoid Bank Holidays, and that the preferred location should be somewhere with a strong Witheridge family link, preferably in Devon.

Proposal: That venue proposals for the 2017 Reunion, preferably somewhere with a strong Witheridge connection and, if possible, in Devon, be made to the Secretary by 30 September 2016, with the Committee to make a decision by 31 October 2016, and that dates should avoid Bank Holidays.

Votes cast: For: 6 Against: 0 Abstain:1

- 3 **Any other business:** This included items introduced both by those present at the AGM, and by absentee members who had responded to our request for their input.

a Web-site password. This was designed to be changed every year so that members who don't renew don't have continued access to info they haven't paid for. A new password was agreed for this year, to be implemented, say, on 30 June 2016. This will give **Bill Dwyne** time to change it, and for confirmed members to be notified prior to the implementation date. New members will receive password when they join. Password for 2017, to be implemented on 1 February 2017, will be decided by 31 October this year, so that members can be sent password with 2017 membership receipt.

Proposal: A new password for 2016 be set, for implementation on or before 30 June 2016, and password for 2017 to be set by 31 October 2016, and implemented on 1 February 2017.

Votes cast: For: 7 Against: 0 Abstain: 0

b Pedigree information. The AGM agreed that any request for pedigree information, whether by members, or by Committee Members, must be directed in the first instance to the Research Co-ordinator, who will either supply it if we have it, or obtain it discreetly.

Proposal: All requests for pedigree information, whether from members, or by Committee Members, must be directed in the first instance to the Research Co-ordinator.

Votes cast: For: 7 Against: 0 Abstain: 0

- c History of WFHS. The AGM agreed that this should be included on the WFHS web-site, with details of prime researchers, ie Honorary President and Honorary Vice-Presidents, with dates of former Honorary Vice-Presidents now deceased, but no dates for living ones. This will give due recognition to those no longer with us, or now retired, whose work has been the backbone of the Society.

Proposal: To include the History of WFHS on the website, with details of prime researchers.

Votes cast: For: 7 Against: 0 Abstain: 0

- d Honorary Membership. Members were reminded that Honorary Membership may be conferred only by decision of the Committee, in accordance with Paragraph 4.3 of our Constitution. An Honorary title of President or Vice-President may be awarded only in accordance with Paragraph 6.16 of the Constitution. No individual can make such a decision.

Proposal: That all members be made aware of the status of Honorary Membership, which is the only form of membership for which payment of subscription is optional.

Votes cast: For: 7 Against: 0 Abstain: 0

- e Accounts. Chairman, **Jason Cook**, was puzzled by odd amounts shown in WFHS income. It was suggested that more detail showing how income was derived, would help. This had been done in the past, and it was agreed that the previous format be shown to the Treasurer as an example.

Proposal: That future accounts be presented in the previous format.

Votes cast: For: 7 Against: 0 Abstain: 0

- f Membership. At the AGM it was noted that in recent years many members have fallen by the wayside because they have simply forgotten to renew. It was suggested that all members be sent a form for standing order/direct debit, so that we receive more automatic renewals and therefore sustain membership levels more easily.

Proposal: That all members be sent a form enabling them to set up automatic subscription renewal by either standing order or direct debit.

Votes cast: For: 7 Against: 0 Abstain: 0

Note: One absentee voter pointed out that standing orders were better, as direct debits cost us more in bank charges.

- g Research information. At the AGM, the Chairman had read out the text of a response from an absentee member to our request for ideas and suggestions, and this had been forwarded to Committee Members. It had been noted that, interestingly, some of the views expressed were shared by the member who had suggested item 14 c. The writer felt that we have

lost track of one of the Society's main objectives – that of researching, and then interpreting the research, and publishing it to give members easy access, and felt that we need to move forward now, and put this into practice. The absentee member added that the huge amount of information we have needs to be catalogued, collated, interpreted, and published. The writer added that Kim Cook had put in an enormous amount of time, money and work into research over the years, and that we should use the money in the bank to pay Kim for the upcoming work involved in collating the stored material, ready for publication for members. The statement added that, if we don't do this, we'll end up with a room full of papers, files and documents that nobody can interpret.

Those present at the AGM agreed that the Society has lost sight of its original aims as set out in Item 3 of the Constitution. It was also agreed that we hold a huge amount of information which needs to be collated and made available to members, and this needs to be done while those who hold it are still with us. This will be a mammoth task, beyond what it is reasonable to expect on a voluntary basis, and the meeting agreed that we use money in the bank to pay for the stored information to be collated in a manner that will make it more easily accessible by members.

Proposal: That the Society pay for the collating and interpreting of its research information in a manner that will make it more easily accessible by members.

Votes cast: For: 6 Against: 0 Abstain: 1

- h Committee communication. From some of the items raised during the meeting, it was apparent that communication between Committee members had deteriorated during the past year, and that this needs to be addressed.

Proposal: That the Committee maintain good communication across all Society matters.

Votes cast: For: 7 Against: 0 Abstain: 0

- i 30th Anniversary. It was agreed that much needs to be made of this in advance, and that it should be well promoted on the web-site and on Facebook. It was pointed out that our new member had arrived as a result of visiting the GoONS web-site, being directed from there to the Witheridge FHS site, and then the seeing the AGM update. The Facebook page should also include the Society's objective (Para 3.1-3.6 of constitution), in more informal, friendly language.

Proposal: That the Society use the new Facebook page, in addition to the existing Witheridge FHS web-site, and the Witheridge page on the Guild of One-Name Studies site, to publicise our 30th Anniversary in 2017, and explore additional ways of making it known to a wider audience.

Votes cast: For: 7 Against: 0 Abstain: 0

At 6.00 pm (BST), the Chairman, Jason Cook, declared the meeting over. Votes were then counted, and minutes of the meeting were subsequently prepared.

Committee Update

Following our 'virtual' Committee Meeting in June, there has been a number of developments. With funding in place to pay for a temporary Secretary, we thought we'd found the ideal candidate. She came well recommended, had excellent IT skills, and the flexibility we needed. Sadly, shortly before taking up the appointment, her personal circumstances unexpectedly changed, and she no longer had the time for our secretarial work. We have yet to find a suitable replacement, and are hoping that someone within the Society will volunteer to help us.

Towards the end of the year it became clear that we were not going to have our Facebook page up and running during 2016, and the Committee had to consider appointing another Facebook Moderator. Paul Barber was asked if he would do this. He agreed, and after another virtual Committee Meeting, was co-opted to the Committee as Facebook Moderator. We are very grateful to Paul, who has already started work on setting up our WFHS Facebook page, and it should be up and running very soon.

Prior to the AGM, our Membership Secretary, Barbara Finemore, said that while she was willing to stay in post until 31 December 2016, she would not be able to continue for the rest of our year. Geoff Shingler was approached, agreed to take on the task, and was co-opted at a virtual Committee Meeting. He is now collating the various lists we hold and updating the information, and membership renewal notices will be emailed to all members very soon.

As is our usual practice, we have expressed our thanks to retiring Committee members, Beth Neilly (former Secretary), and Barbara Finemore, by sending them gift vouchers.

To update the list of Committee Members, the full list is now as follows.

Chairman: Jason Cook*

Secretary: vacant

Treasurer: Liz Davey*

Assistant Treasurer: Chris Davey

Membership Secretary: Geoff Shingler*

Webmaster: Bill Dwyne*

Facebook Moderator: Paul Barber*

Research Co-ordinator: Kim Cook*

Newsletter Editor: vacant

Committee Members: Roy Cook, Pamela Glynn, and Alison Smith

Those indicated with * can be contacted using their title @witheridgefhs.com

The Committee also appoints our two Overseas Representatives, who kindly volunteer to co-ordinate communications in their regions. We are very grateful for all they do. Our current Overseas Representatives are : **Australia:** Richard & Jennifer Woolcott **North America:** Jim Witheridge Kim Cook remains the Society's **Hon Life President**. Sadly, following the death of **Joyce Browne**, we now have just two **Hon Vice-Presidents**, appointed for their enormous contributions to Witheridge research. These are Kathy Witheridge (Sarnia Canada) and Richard Witheridge (Bath, UK).