



# *W*itheridge

## Family History Society

Winter 2021 - 2022

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# Message from the Chairman

Happy New Year to all our members! Hopefully 2022 will be a better year than 2021 was.

Firstly, let me apologise that there have been no newsletters or information in the last few months. This is primarily because there has been nothing to report! The issues that the whole world have been facing as a result of Covid are largely to blame, however there is one bit of news that does need to be put in black and white.

Further to the Virtual AGM held last year, most of you will have seen the minutes, and be aware of the decision that has been made. Constitutionally, we are duty bound to report the outcome of all meetings in the Society's publication to its members, however, I did not want to send out a newsletter with that as the overriding bulk of content, hence the delay in publication.

After almost 35 years, the Committee felt it necessary to wind the Society up. There were several factors involved in making the decision, which I will attempt to explain to you here. It was not a decision that was taken lightly, but by the same token, we felt that there was no other option.

All the Committee functions have historically been voluntary (and therefore unpaid) positions. However, in recent years, there has been no one willing to take on the role of Secretary/Newsletter Editor, so the Society have had to make it effectively a paid position. Whilst the honorarium that Amy has received has been very modest (and she has done excellent work for us!), it has been sufficient to over stretch the Society's limited resources. Although we were forced to increase the subscription cost in 2021 (for the first time since the Society's inception), it wasn't enough to solve the problem. Subscriptions would have needed to be raised significantly in 2022 as well, and it was felt that our membership would no longer be getting value for money.

This has also been compounded by the membership numbers gradually dwindling as members leave the Society, with no new young blood coming in to replace them. Given the ease of access to information on the internet, (which hasn't been readily available until the last 10-15 years), there is no incentive for people to pay to join a society, when their computer allows them to do it for free.

Both of these issues have been focal points of Committee discussions over the last few years, without them requiring imminent and drastic action. It was always hoped that we would be able to find a solution to the problem before it got urgent. However, we were unable to do so. Furthermore, the passing of our Founder, Kim Cook, left a great hole. The knowledge and enthusiasm she brought to the Society could not be easily replaced, even had we been able to find someone willing to volunteer to take over the role she performed.

Therefore, this will be the last Witheridge Society newsletter. I did not want to go out on a note of doom and gloom, which is why I asked everyone to send in festive pictures from Christmas 2021. Hopefully they will provide you with some enjoyment.

Thank you to everyone that has supported the Society over the years.

**Jason Cook**

# Christmas 2021 Celebrations

A photo from Christmas Day: Philip Milnes-Smith (wearing headphones only able to meet the group via zoom), Geoff Shingler, Catherine Shingler, Alison Smith, and Hannah Shingler is in the front.



Pictures taken at Jason Cook's local social club, on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2021, where they were providing a 3 course Christmas Dinner (prawn cocktail, turkey and trimmings, and ice cream). From left to right: Zoe Cook, Jason Cook, Lauren Cook, Roy Cook



However, there are two people missing from the photo – Ethan Cook, and his fiancée Millie Gridley. That was because Millie had spent over 24 hours in the company of a friend, who then tested positive for Covid on that morning. Sensibly, they decided to self isolate, which was exactly the right thing to do, as Millie then tested positive on Tuesday morning, and Ethan tested positive on Wednesday evening.

But what we didn't know at that stage was that Jason had caught Covid from a different source, and started having symptoms the next day. They were initially attributed to a late reaction to the booster jab the previous Friday, but a positive test on the Tuesday evening dispelled that idea.

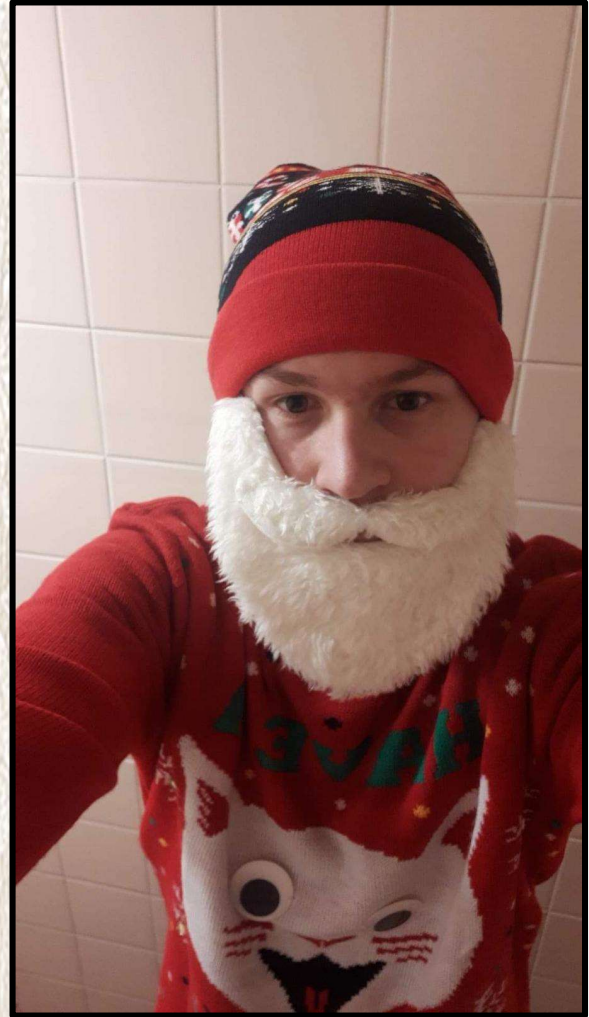
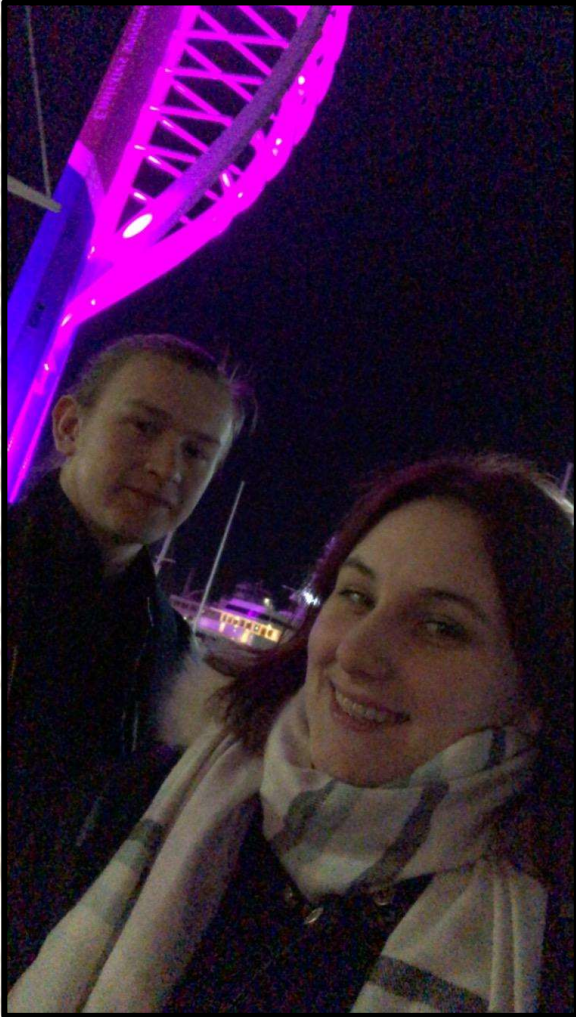
Christmas was now well and truly cancelled. Dinner for 10 on Boxing Day was now dinner for 3 – 3 days running!!! Lauren also tested positive over Christmas, but fortunately Zoe (who is slightly immuno-compromised) didn't. Luckily, neither Jason nor Lauren felt ill during the required isolation period.

The day after this picture was taken Roy went up to Nottingham to spend Christmas with his other son, Adam, and – surprise, surprise – tested positive while he was there.

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Thankfully, he didn't pass it on to Adam, nor did he suffer too much, despite having had a chest infection for a few weeks beforehand.

They say a picture speaks a thousand words – but the words above wouldn't be expected from that picture!



It wouldn't be fair to mention Ethan and Millie, without including their forthcoming wedding! Covid permitting, they will be getting married on the 12<sup>th</sup> of March. The wedding should have been in March last year, but had to be postponed because of lockdown. They have been together for 8 years, so it can't be said they have rushed into it!

I'm sure everyone will join me in wishing them all the best for a long and happy marriage!

Before that, though, there is another celebration to come, in the shape of a visit to Nottingham to mark Adam's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday in the middle of February. He is keeping it low-key, but it will be nice to have the family together. Many happy returns!

# Christmas 2021 Celebrations

Photos from Christmas with Liz and Chris Davey.

