

ISSN 136-8883



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

Volume 22 Number 1

Spring 2008

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

*continued on inside back cover*

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

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

<http://www.WitheridgeFHS.com>

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

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# Editorial

It's been a long time since the last issue of *The Witheridge Times*, for which I must apologise. To try and make up for this, we have packed a little more into this issue!

However, not all of the extra material is a riveting read—we have included the Officers' Reports and the 2007–8 Financial Statement for members to review before the Annual General Meeting (usually these appear in the following issue). Nevertheless, if you are plan to attend the AGM, please take time to read these reports beforehand.

Sadly, we also include two obituaries.

I would like to thank all those who have contributed articles. Please keep them coming!

Finally, I would like to remind members that they can download a *colour* version of this magazine from the Society's website at [www.WitheridgeFHS.com](http://www.WitheridgeFHS.com). To do this, you will need to sign on with your membership number and password.

If you cannot remember your password (or even ever receiving one), please e-mail me at [Editor@WitheridgeFHS.com](mailto:Editor@WitheridgeFHS.com) (and please include your name, membership number and address as identification).

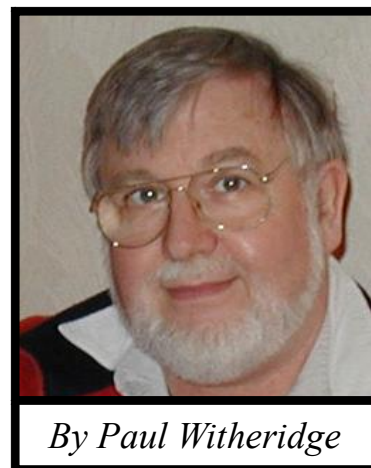
## **Mea Culpa**

Unfortunately, two mistakes crept into the last issue.

First, on page 27, it incorrectly stated that members had encountered *Una Stock* at Combe Martin harbour. Una Stock wrote to put me right: it was, in fact, *Una Parsons* (who is Una Stock's third cousin once removed). Thank you, Una, for your letter and apologies to both you and Una Parsons for the confusion.

Second, on page 20, we published photos of some of the lovely craftwork on display at the Reunion. Regrettably, one of these was incorrectly attributed to *Maureen Witheridge*. Maureen had brought along a painting of a landscape, whereas the photo shows a painting of a flower. Apologies both to Maureen and to the unknown member who did bring the painting shown in the picture.

Let's hope this issue is less error-prone!



*By Paul Witheridge*

# Subscriptions—a Reminder

*By the Membership Secretary*

I should like to say a big ‘thank you’ to all those members who have already paid their 2008 subscriptions—it’s a real help when these subs come in promptly and makes my job a lot easier!

However, I do need to remind those who have not yet sent in their membership dues, that these must be paid by the end of May, otherwise your membership will lapse. Please remember that all UK subscriptions are now £10 per year; there are no longer any £5 or £7 subscriptions. Overseas subscriptions remain unchanged at £12 per year.

Cheques should be made out to **The Witheridge Family History Society** ( and not simply to *The Witheridge Society*) and mailed to the Membership Secretary at the address shown on the inside of the front cover of this magazine.

If you have internet access, you can also pay electronically, via PayPal. This is especially convenient for overseas members as it handles any currency conversion. We do ask you to pay a small surcharge—60 pence for UK, 70 pence for overseas, subscriptions—to cover the transaction charge levied by PayPal, but you don’t have to pay any postage! It’s easy; I used it to pay my own subscription.

If you want to use PayPal, just contact me; I will ask the Treasurer to e-mail you a payment request. When this arrives, you just click on a link in the message; this takes you to a PayPal payment web-page where you just use your credit or debit card to pay online.

If you have any questions, you can e-mail me at [Membership@WitheridgeFHS.com](mailto:Membership@WitheridgeFHS.com), telephone me on 01628-484026 or write to me at the address shown on the inside cover of the magazine.

Best wishes to all members and their families for 2008.

## **On the side:** Please don’t shout ‘boo’ at a Devonshire crab

Experts at Plymouth University spent six months studying hermit crabs in Plymouth (Devon) and Looe (Cornwall). They discovered that the Cornish crabs are significantly bolder than their Devon counterparts, who were described as ‘quite shy’.

The marine biology experts presented the crabs with an unfamiliar stimulus and saw how long it took each one to recover from being startled by it.

The scientists don’t know the reason for this difference, saying ‘It could be the threat of predation—or it could be to do with wave action. That’s something we hope to look at in the future.’

# Kent 2008: The Witheridge Reunion and Annual General Meeting



This year's Reunion and Annual General Meeting (AGM) is being held at the Holiday Inn (Central) in Ashford, Kent, over the weekend of 17–18 May. See page 14 for directions to the hotel. If you still need to make reservations at the hotel, phone 01233 619682, ask to speak to Sarah Mitchell, the Conference and Event Sales Coordinator, and identify yourself as attending the Witheridge FHS meeting for a preferential room rate.

As usual, the AGM will take place on the Saturday morning, starting at 10:30 a.m. in the hotels's Mersham Room. Coffee and tea will be available from 10 a.m. We aim to keep the AGM short (and sweet), finishing by 12:30 a.m. at the latest. Lunchtime snacks or light meals are available in the hotel; there are other eating places in the vicinity. The afternoon's session will start at 2 p.m., with a talk on the Witheridges of Chatham and tea and coffee will be served at 3:30 p.m. In the evening, we will celebrate with our traditional Reunion dinner in the hotel restaurant.

On Sunday morning, we are going to hold a 'treasure hunt'. This involves gallivanting around the countryside, by car, looking for clues and is great fun. You need two or more people per car, one to drive and at least one to look for clues. It's not a race and the slowest often does best! We'll meet in the car park of the *Bybrook Barn Garden Centre*, opposite the Holiday Inn on the A28, at 10 a.m. and we'll end up in a pub for Sunday lunch. If you can't make the Saturday, but would like to join in with the treasure hunters on Sunday, just come along (if you have any problems finding the start point, call my mobile phone, on 07956-983928, or Paul on 07956-851580).

## ***Agenda for the Annual General Meeting***

1. Chairman's opening and welcome
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the previous 2007 AGM held at Bovey Tracey, Devon
4. Matters arising from these minutes
5. Matters arising from officers' reports. See pages 7–14 for copies of these reports.
6. Election of officers and committee members

The entire committee is standing for re-election, as follows:

*Chairman:* Richard Witheridge  
proposed by Ron Dixon  
seconded by Paul Witheridge (Canada)



7. Overseas representatives

*Proposed by Richard Witheridge (chairman)*

*Seconded by Paul Witheridge (vice-chairman)*

The following have agreed to continue as the Society's overseas representatives and the Society is delighted to accept their offer.

*Australia:* Judith and Allan Witheridge

*New Zealand:* Velma Metcalfe

*North America:* Kathy Witheridge

8. Effect of the increase in the annual subscription for the Federation of Family History Societies (FFHS)

*Proposed by Beryl Witheridge (treasurer)*

*Seconded by Paul Witheridge (UK)*

The WFHS subscribes to two national genealogical societies, namely the FFHS and the GoONS (Guild of One-Named Studies). At the moment this costs the WFHS £42 per year, but the FFHS is proposing changes to both the way it calculates subscription rates (based on the number of WFHS members) and the benefits we receive from the FFHS. We need to discuss this and review whether the WFHS should continue its membership of these national societies.

*Note:* The proposer did not feel that a simple resolution, such as 'The Society should not renew its membership of the FFHS', was suitable, as this is a complex subject. Therefore this is a discussion item which may result in a motion from the floor. However, such a motion (according to the Society's constitution) is not binding, but acts as a recommendation to the Society's committee which must then make any decisions.

9. Regional social get-togethers

*Proposed by Pamela Glynn*

*Seconded by Kim Cook*

Because many members cannot attend the annual reunion, it is proposed that social get-togethers be hosted by members in various regions.

10. Cost of membership in New Zealand and Australia

*Proposed by Paul Witheridge (UK)*

*Seconded by Beryl Witheridge*

In 2007, Sue Witheridge reported that the £12 overseas subscription translates to around \$NZ 25, but to understand its effective cost in New Zealand, UK members should think of it as £25. There is a similar, but lesser effect in Australia. Previous discussions have always concluded that we should stick with the current distribution of a printed magazine. It is worth revisiting this to see if we think that an alternate offering, such as electronic distribution, should be considered and whether we should canvas our overseas members' opinions.



*Note:* As in item 8, the proposer did not feel that a simple resolution, such as ‘The Society should offer an electronic version of the magazine at a reduced subscription rate’, was suitable. So, this is an item for discussion, with a decision being left to the Society’s committee.

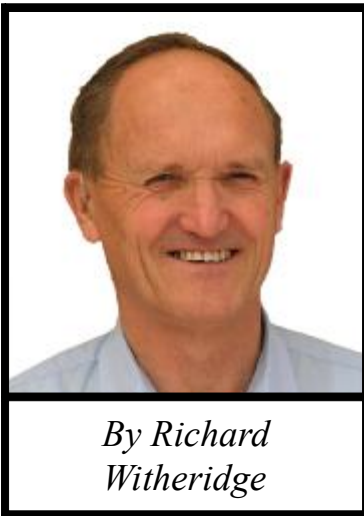
11. Christmas card charity for 2008 to be OXFAM

*Proposed by Brenda Dixon*

*Seconded by Beryl Witheridge*

12. Date and venue for 2009 Reunion
13. Date of next committee meeting
14. Any other business

## ***The Chairman’s Report***



At our last meeting, held at Bovey Tracey, I had the honour of being elected Chairman, so it now falls to me to give this report.

Bovey Tracey was of course our twentieth anniversary and I think it was a very successful event although the Sunday trip could have been better.

However since that time, which now seems a long time ago, there have been a few sad events. We have lost our dear friend and long standing Chairman, Graham Browne. He was able to be with us for the anniversary meeting and was cheerful despite his illness.

Maureen has sadly lost her mum, who passed away in November at the age of 94 and was lucky to have been able to live on her own, with care workers attending, until a few months from the end. This has meant that Maureen and I have been rushing to Bath every few weeks to get things sorted with the house. This will continue for a while.

I believe Beryl and Paul have been having their own problems and hope these will soon clear up and allow them to continue with their respective tasks in the Society.

Unfortunately for the first time since the inaugural meeting of the Witheridge Society in 1987, I will not be able to attend due a double-booking. Maureen and I will be in Italy with Mark, Jenny and James.

On a happier note, we have some new members to the Society, so we welcome the following: Derek Andrews and his wife Shirley, and Nicola Humprey. We trust you will find belonging to the society helpful in tracing your families and enjoy meeting with us at our reunions.

We also note that Joyce Browne has moved to a new home and trust that she will be very happy there.

## ***The Secretary's report***

Since my last report in May 2007, the year has simply flown by. For me, personally, it has been an extremely busy one and my duties as secretary have had to take a back seat. I must apologise for this, but I am sure you will agree that family comes first.

Nevertheless, I have endeavoured to send out agenda and other information to members via e-mail or, where we have no e-mail address, by ordinary mail. The response has been rather disappointing. If the Society is to serve the needs of its members and thrive, we need input from you—please let me have more feedback. To those of you who responded: thank you.

Somewhat peripherally to my role as secretary, I should like to report that the sales of the WFHS Recipe book went very well; in fact we needed a second printing. I have now received a further seventeen recipes from members, some of whom I seriously badgered—sorry! I intend to make these available as additional pages to be inserted into the recipe book and hope to have some sets of these updates available for sale at the reunion (for £1.50 per set, which goes to the Society). If anyone not attending would like to have the additional recipes update, please let me know via e-mail, snail mail or phone 01628 484026.

## ***The Membership Secretary's Report***

Our membership has declined slightly over the past year. Carolyn Green cancelled her membership and three others—Jeff Basset, Marlene Thomas and Philip Witheridge—let their memberships lapse. We also said a sad farewell to two members who passed away: Graham Browne and Ray Witheridge. On the positive side, we were delighted to welcome two new full members—Derek Andrews and Nicola Humphrey—and two new family members: Shirley Andrews, who joined together with Derek, and Tia Witheridge, who was 'born into the Society'.

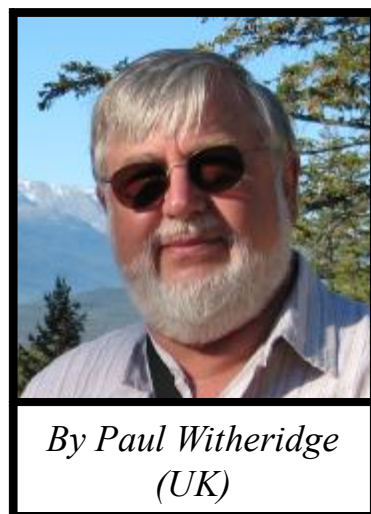
Our membership now stands at fifty-one full members, fifty-six additional family members and two honorary members, making a grand total of one hundred and nine. For anyone confused by these names: 'full' members are those who pay a subscription and receive a magazine, 'additional' members are other family members who share the same magazine and 'honorary' members are those who cannot claim descent from a Witheridge but have been awarded a membership for services to the Society.

This year past was also the one in which we established a uniform UK subscription rate of £10, affecting nine of our members. This was the first subscription increase since the Society was founded in 1987 and seems to have been accepted without any hitch.

The option of paying subscriptions electronically, via PayPal, which was introduced last year, has been used by several members (I used it myself) and I would recommend it to overseas



*By Beryl Witheridge*



*By Paul Witheridge  
(UK)*

members as a convenient way of solving the problem of paying a subscription in pounds sterling.

Finally, I should like to say a big ‘thank you’ to those who paid their subscriptions promptly—it makes a poor membership secretary’s day!

## ***The Editor’s Report***

*By Paul Witheridge (UK)*

This has not been the best year of my editorship with the failure to publish the winter issue for 2007, for which I can only apologise. This fiasco stemmed from a combination of factors, which included circumstances within my own family and problems affecting the regular contributors to the magazine.

To make up for it, we are trying to include more material in the 2008 issues of The Witheridge Times, but this will depend on what articles are available for inclusion—so, please, get out your quill pens and send me some copy!

A really big ‘thank you’ to those who contributed material for the magazine—I always heave a big sigh of relief when these drop through my letter box (or into my e-mail inbox). I would especially like to thank Joyce Browne, who came up with two articles, despite immense upheaval in her personal life.

Finally, don’t forget the archive CD of all sixty-eight (well, now sixty-nine) issues of The Witheridge Times. It is a really useful tool when you need to find something that was published in one of the back issues. Those of you who already have it, it’s well worth keeping your archive set up-to-date and I am happy to e-mail you the updates on request. To those of you that don’t have it, it’s a snip at only £4.50 plus postage.

## ***The Webmaster’s Report***



*By Paul Witheridge  
(Canada)*

In 2007, the Society’s website underwent a major reformat and now provides for menu branches into innumerable categories such as events, both historical and future, photos and research.

Unfortunately, input to the webmaster has been extremely sparse and thus the categories to date are *very* numerable. I am more than happy to add relevant family history items or links (which meet with the approval of the committee), but being more ‘techie’ than genealogist, I need the help of the membership to develop this content.

So, please visit the website if you haven’t done so recently and feel free to comment to the webmaster, or other members of the committee, on what you would like to see. People are gradually realising

how useful an information repository that’s as close as your computer can be—but we need to post information you will find useful! It’s *your* website!

## ***The Research Coordinator's Report***

In contrast to last year, work this year has been more about coordination than research. Sadly, there has again been little or no coordination in terms of information from members, but I've continued to try and coordinate the many records already held by the Society about the various branches of the Witheridge family.

### **Enhanced Narrative Pedigrees**

The main thrust of this coordination has continued to be the compilation of Enhanced Narrative Pedigrees (ENPs), bringing together data from a wide range of sources relating to specific branches of the family. Information from parish registers of baptisms, marriages and burials, civil registration of births, marriages and deaths, census returns, trade directories, wills and probate records, is combined to give a simple, coherent narrative of each family, branch by branch and generation by generation.

Although this year only a couple of new family lines have been added to the collection of ENPs, a considerable amount of new detail has been added to many of the existing ones. Some of the information has come from online or digital images of original records, and some has been extracted from my own original card index. It's a massive task to extract details from the thousands of cards in this index, and combine it into these ENPs, but the work continues.

It would not be appropriate to have these ENPs on the website, but if any member would like to know more about his or her Witheridge ancestors, please e-mail me at [Witheridge1987@aol.com](mailto:Witheridge1987@aol.com).

Family branches for which I currently have full or partial ENPs include:

<i>Australia – early settlers</i>	<i>Bideford, Northam, etc – Causey Witheridges</i>
<i>Bradworthy/Morwenstow</i>	<i>Bristol – Reuben Witheridge</i>
<i>Buckland</i>	<i>Combe Martin and Berrynarbor</i>
<i>Ermington</i>	<i>Highgate, Camberwell – Wetheridge</i>
<i>Ilfracombe</i>	<i>Kent</i>
<i>Kent, London, Birmingham</i>	<i>Modbury</i>
<i>Newton Ferrers</i>	<i>South Hams (Sherford, Yealmpton)</i>
<i>Thurlestone and South Milton</i>	<i>Wembury</i>

### **National Burials Index**

Now that the *National Burials Index* is available online to subscribers, I have extracted all the Witheridge burials from the index. However, the family history societies for a number of counties have not contributed to this index, preferring to distribute the information they have collected through their county FHS publications. Devon is among the counties not included, so this index isn't quite as useful as it might otherwise have been. Nevertheless, I have gleaned some interesting results, particularly from Kent and Warwickshire. Additionally, there are entries for the Staffordshire parish of Brewood in the 17th century. Further investigation will be needed to determine if this was indeed a hitherto unknown branch of the Witheridge family, or whether the surname is an accidental variant of another name.



*By Kim Cook*



## **A Place in the Family**

I must apologise for not having been able to complete the promised book: *A Place in the Family*. This book, which I've been preparing for some years, tells the story of some of the homes that Witheridges lived in for long periods of time. For each property there will be details of the location; the property itself, its age, structure and style; the Witheridge connection, with information on those who lived there and when; and information on the more recent history of the house. In many cases I have photographs of the properties, taken in the last fifteen or so years.

A number of these properties were/are in Tavistock, where at least three Witheridge branches lived at various times. Most of these Witheridges were tenants of the Russell family—better known as Dukes of Bedford and Earls of Tavistock. Their estate papers hold a considerable amount of information that would greatly enhance our knowledge of the Tavistock Witheridges. For many years these documents were kept in the archives at Woburn Abbey, but have now been transferred to the Devon Record Office. Sadly, it has been impossible for me to get to Devon to study the Tavistock estate papers, and therefore publication of the book has had to be delayed until such a trip is possible.

## **Parish Profiles**

In the course of my professional work, I often include thumbnail sketches of the parishes in which a particular family lived, and I'm gradually building up a collection of the Parish Profiles for a number of places throughout the UK.

The information in these profiles varies from parish to parish, but is usually a combination of the following, with occasional extra details:

- location of the parish, its geography and terrain
- parish church dedication, style and history
- details of non-conformist churches and when founded
- information on local schools and charities
- population
- transport
- occupations

Among the Devon and Cornwall parishes already included in my Parish Profile files are: Antony, Barnstaple, Berrynarbor, Combe Martin, Ermington, Ilfracombe, Kilkhampton, Maker, Morwenstow, Newton Ferrers, Northam, Plympton St Mary, Plymstock, Porthleven, Stoke Damerel, Tamerton Foliot and Wembury. Other counties for which I have details of some parishes include Dorset, Kent, Middlesex, Norfolk, Suffolk, Somerset, Surrey, and Wiltshire, with a few Welsh and Scottish parishes as well. As yet, I've not added any Midlands parishes to the list, but I hope to do so in the near future.

Again, any member wanting brief details of the parish in which ancestors lived should e-mail me at [Witheridge1987@aol.com](mailto:Witheridge1987@aol.com). I can't guarantee that I'll have the information you need already on file, but I'll do my best to find it and add it to the collection.

## Research in Kent

Given the location of this year's AGM, I have paid particular attention to the information we hold on the Witheridges of Kent. Although we do hold a fair amount of information, this has never been verified or accurately coordinated, and this I have tried to do. The results can be heard and seen in the afternoon presentation at the 2008 reunion, and will, of course, be incorporated into the ENP for this branch of the family.

## Witheridges Remembered

Entries for our Witheridges Remembered project have again been disappointing, and again I seem to be the only member contributing to this. For those of our members who have forgotten, or are unaware of, this project, we are trying to compile a collection of pen portraits of earlier members of the various Witheridge families, whether from personal recollections, or stories handed down in the family. We're aiming to provide information that official records can't supply – details of personalities, foibles and temperaments, with anecdotes and character insights. Please, ensure that the Witheridges of your own family are recorded in this volume, so that others from your branch of the family may have some personal insight into the life and character of those you have known. Don't let the memories die!

## The Treasurer's Report

The Society's Year End Account Statement for 2007–8 is displayed on the facing page. It shows that the Society's bank account is holding up well.

However, it also shows that income from membership subscriptions in 2008 (£254.54) is well down on the previous year (£743.24).

There are two main reasons for this:

- 2007's receipts were inflated, and 2008's deflated, by many members paying for three years in one go
- 2008 subscriptions are coming in slower than they did in 2007, deferring more income to the next financial year

Offsetting this, the bank account has 'benefited' from the cancellation of the winter issue of the magazine, which represented an unexpected, if undesirable, windfall of about £130.

The statement also seems to show that last year's reunion was very costly at £401.75. However, these costs were offset by the many members who donated money and/or items for sale (including a specific donation to cover the cost of the attendance certificates, which was counted in the previous financial year). So, the net cost of last year's reunion was only £44.10.

Despite the health of our bank account, I would like to repeat what I said last year: things may look good on paper, but costs are increasing and failure to contain them could quickly overwhelm us. In particular, we should aim to minimise future spending on the venues for our AGMs. The net costs for the 2006 and 2007 AGMs were very light. However, this year will be considerably more expensive and would be even more so if we had not received a substantial, anonymous donation towards the costs—a very big 'thank you' for that.



# Wetheridge Family History Society

## Income and Expenditure for Year-ending 21 April 2008

**Balance brought forward from April Statement 2007 No. 238** £ 1,714.29

### Income

Membership Subscriptions	£ 254.54
Donations	£ 133.87
Sale of magazines	£ 7.50
Sale of items at Reunion	£ 279.65
Other incomings	£ 2.38
<b>Total income for year-ending 21 April 2008</b>	<b>£ 677.94</b>

### Expenditure

Printing & Distribution of Magazine Vol 21 No 1	£ 129.18
Printing & Distribution of Magazine Vol 21 No 2	£ 120.49
Preparation of Reunion attendance certificates	£ 50.00
In memoriam donation	£ 50.00
Reunion refreshments (less contributions from attendees)	£ 188.75
Reunion excursion to Wetheridge villages (less contributions from attendees)	£ 93.00
Donations to churches visited during reunion excursion	£ 30.00
Gifts to guest speakers	£ 40.00
Subscription to Guild-of One-Name-Studies (GoONS) for 2007	£ 12.00
Subscription to Federation of Family History Society (FFHS) for 2007	£ 30.00
Christmas cards & postage	£ 28.96
Other outgoings	£ 2.38
<b>Total expenditure for year-ending 21 April 2008</b>	<b>£ 774.76</b>

**Final Balance as of April Statement 2008 No. 248** £ 1,617.47

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



**B M Witheridge**  
*Treasurer*  
Dated: 25-04-2008



**P R Witheridge**  
*Assistant Treasurer*  
Dated: 25-04-2008



**R Dixon**  
*Auditor*  
Dated: 27-04-2008

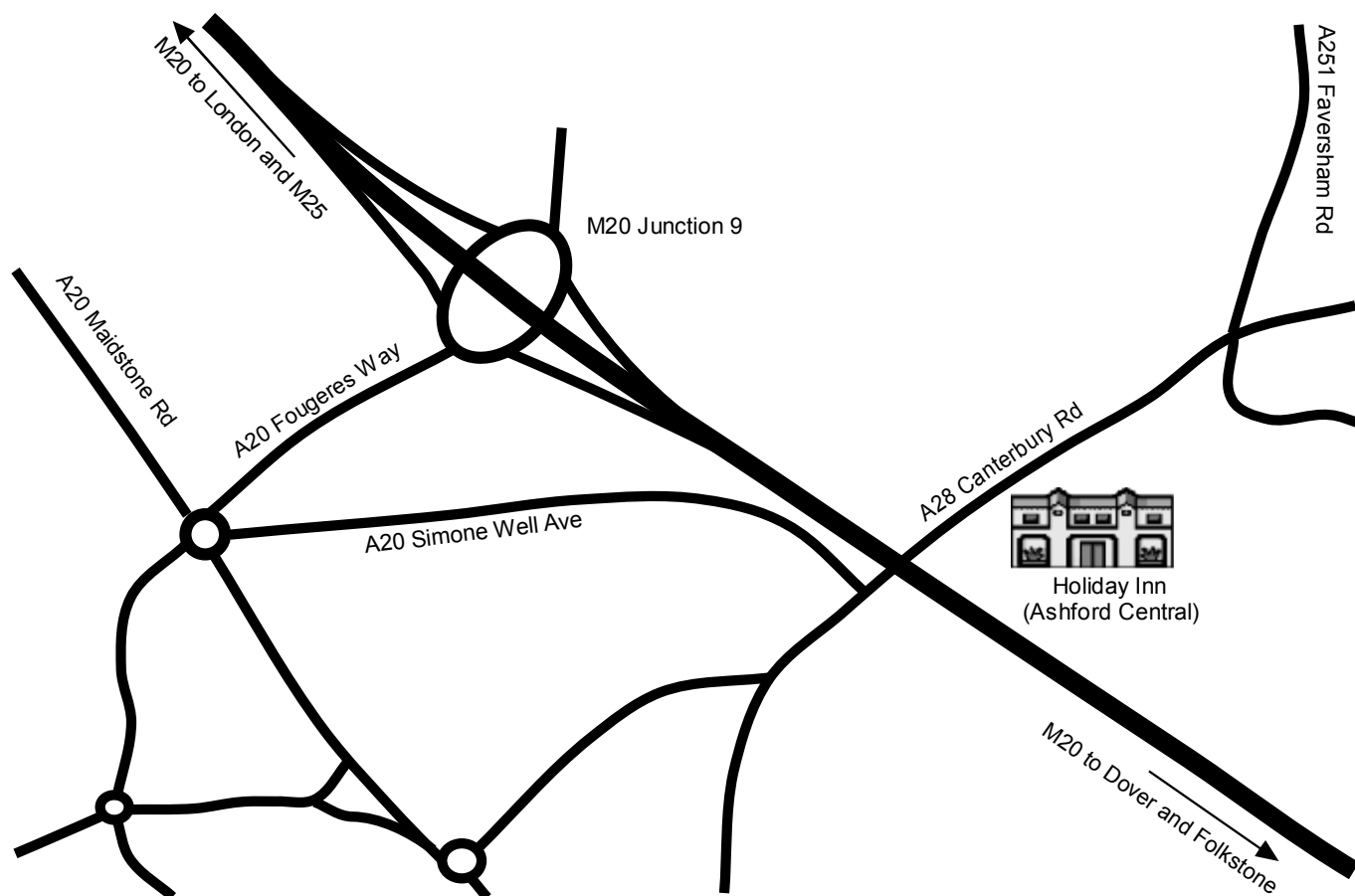
We also need to keep a careful watch on other Society spending and you will notice an item on the AGM agenda to discuss the cost of the Society's membership in the Federation of Family History Societies (FFHS) in the light of changes in the benefits received from the FFHS. Society spending is managed by the Society's committee and I urge all committee members to keep costs in mind throughout the coming year.

## ***Directions to the Holiday Inn (Ashford Central)***

If you are driving:

1. Leave the M20 at junction 9, taking the A20 exit for Ashford.
2. At the junction roundabout, turn onto the A20 (Fougeres Way), following signs for Ashford (West), Canterbury, Tenterden and Faversham. If arriving from the west (e.g. from London or the M25), this will be the third exit off the roundabout. If arriving from the east (e.g. from Dover or Folkstone), it will be the first exit off the junction roundabout.
3. After just over half a mile, you will come to another roundabout. Take the first exit onto the A20 (Simone Well Avenue).
4. After another half mile, or so, turn left onto the A28 (Canterbury Road).
5. After passing back under the M20, the Holiday Inn (Ashford Central) will be a short distance on your right. It has excellent car parking.

If you are arriving by train, it's probably best to take a taxi from Ashford International Station to the hotel.







*By Lorna Home*

## My Dad Sam and the War: a Daughter's Memories

The day war broke out I was eight. We were on holiday, in our caravan (built by my dad) sited on the cliff tops at Polzeath in Cornwall.

All week the men in the camp had been talking in groups, their expressions grim. I was the only girl amongst seven or eight boys and, although I went around with them, we regarded each other with disdain. Somehow we never got to play war games and suddenly, on that bright, sunny day, we were whisked away to our homes. I never saw any of them again.

My dad decided the first priority was an air raid shelter and I went with him to the field at the top of the road. We selected a site by the hedge and dug out a sizeable hole before going home for tea. When we returned next day it had a foot of water in the bottom and more was trickling in from the stream on the other side of the hedge. That idea was abandoned and we never had a shelter. We slept under the dining room table during the worst of the raids on Plymouth.

Before we went on holiday that summer, Sam had been to Loughborough College to do a Physical Education Course. There are photos of him standing on one hand and he could do all sorts of acrobatics. I often wonder about that, because he taught Woodwork and Science.

Soon after we got home, he joined the Home Guard and his spare time was spent training. At one time he was training commandos in unarmed combat; I remember the day he took me into the field at the back of the house and taught me some simple moves. I never had to use them then, but they were useful later!

Although guns were in short supply, Sam had a .22 rifle. He was a crack shot and would shoot rabbits for our dinner over the garden hedge—usually one shot, one rabbit. Early in the war, he was sent to Woolacombe in Devon to watch troops under fire with live ammunition. When he arrived home he was considerably shaken as one soldier had been killed by a ricocheting bullet.

As Sam had been brought up on the edge of Dartmoor, he knew his way around—many are the warnings I received about the dangers of 'The Moor'—and then, when the Ministry of Defence later disclosed that there had been special Home Guard groups who would have lived in dugouts and tried to harass the enemy in the event of an invasion, I wondered about Sam's role and his training. I know there were six of them who had a base at a place called Plymbridge, where they spent a great deal of time. Sam told me once that they had unrolled a rope, placed razor blades in it and then rolled it up again; it was for raising in front of enemy motorcyclists.

The invasion never came, but there was plenty of bombing of Plymouth docks. It must have been very frightening for my mother, as Sam was out on Home Guard duty at night. She always held us closely under the dining room table, as we listened to the thump of bombs dropping. At that time there was a constant flow of refugees to our house from Plymouth.

They came, shocked and mostly with a suitcase which was all there was left of their belongings. They stayed for one night before being placed in a refugee centre, usually the school.

The day came when Sam received his calling up papers. All was doom and gloom, but with the insouciance of childhood I knew my dad would come home. He did—the next day, as his teaching was considered a reserved occupation (or was it just his teaching?).

Life was not easy after that. Plymouth was being bombed and the school where Sam taught became a refugee centre. Both my parents would spend all day there and my mum would come home to cook a meal for four of us and two airmen who were billeted on us. Not a big deal you might think but there was no gas, electricity or water and from our back door we could look across and see Plymouth burning. I came home from school one day to see two candles on the mantelpiece, a pan of potatoes bubbling on the open fire of the Triplex grate and the smell of a pie cooking in the oven. We never seemed to go hungry.

One day my mum came home from shopping with an ecstatic look on her face. A friend had given her twelve, day-old chicks and we could see her calculating the eggs and meat they would provide. Sam carefully pointed out that it was February and we had nowhere for them to survive. Undaunted my mum decided to keep them in the house and persuaded Sam to make a run for them beside the chimney breast of the Triplex. It was one of my jobs to keep them clean.

When they were old enough and the weather was warmer they went into the greenhouse. There were seven hens and five cocks. I don't remember the cocks ever getting old enough to crow, but I do remember the day the first one was destined for the pot. No one liked the idea of killing the cockerel and there was much discussion on the kindest way. At last it was decided that I would hold the struggling bird while Sam chopped its head off with an axe. All went well, except that we were totally unprepared for its last moments as a headless bird ran riot around the garden! However, the hens kept us in eggs for some time but, we never had any more day-old chicks.

As the war progressed, Sam's school became a cinema in the evenings as the Plymouth cinemas had been flattened. Sam was the projectionist and Gwen, my mum, took the money at the door. We children had to go too and I saw every black and white film there was. I was entranced.

Although my parents worked hard and must have been extremely tired at times, there was always time for us. We were taken at Christmas and in the summer to Falmouth or Porth Towan on the north Cornish coast, where my mother's sister and her husband lived. They had a business at the gates of Falmouth Docks and, as the docks were bombed frequently, the bungalow on the North Coast was where everyone slept. My uncle had a big garden which produced marvellous vegetables in the light, rich soil. Sam and my uncle were always up early to make the most of the day. Sam built a greenhouse for tomato plants and the tomatoes were the largest I've ever seen. At that time the Home Guard had requisitioned the caravan and it was so badly damaged that we could never use it again.

One night, when we were sitting in a neighbour's house, there was a big bang and the house shook. An armour piercing bomb had been offloaded from an enemy plane and landed in the

field at the bottom of the garden. The adults were all visibly shaken at the narrow escape, though we children had been provided with a wonderful play area. The bomb crater became an adventure playground for the local children and many were the war games, pirate adventures and Robin Hood escapades.

Time, then, seemed irrelevant as the years traced the course of battles. We had a world map tacked to our dining room wall and drawing pins which were moved to chart advances and retreats. I don't remember much about the later part of the war except that Dad was always busy, as the school playing fields had become an agricultural holding and we still had our garden to keep going.

Looking back, I can only feel privileged to have known the families around us who tackled those dark days with humour and courage.

### **On the side: A hospital patient**

A sweet grandmother phoned Wigan infirmary.

She timidly asked 'Is it possible to speak to someone who can tell me how a patient is doing?'

The operator said 'I'll be glad to help, dear. What is the name and room number of the patient?'

The grandmother replied in her weak and tremulous voice 'Janice Flynn, room 302.'

The operator replied 'Let me check. Oh, good news: her records say that Janice is doing very well, her blood pressure is fine; her blood results came back normal and her consultant, Dr. Cohen, has scheduled her to be discharged on Tuesday.'

The grandmother said 'Thank you. That's wonderful, I was so worried! God bless you for the good news.'

The operator replied 'You're more than welcome. Is Janice your daughter?'

The grandmother said 'No, I'm Janice Flynn from room 302, no-one tells me anything in here!'

# Obituaries

## **Graham Browne, 14 June 1924 – 3 August 2007**

*By Kim Cook*

Graham Browne, for many years Chairman of the Witheridge Family History Society, and husband of our former Editor Joyce (née Witheridge), died of cancer on Friday 3 August 2007 in the Luton and Dunstable Hospital.

In 2004 Graham had been diagnosed with mouth cancer and, following surgery, had been fitted with a prosthetic palate. For some time it seemed as though the cancer had been entirely removed, and although never entirely comfortable with the prosthesis, Graham recovered sufficiently to be able to lead a reasonably active life for over two years. Sadly, his condition began to deteriorate during the winter of 2006, but it was not until early in 2007 that he underwent tests to see if the cancer had returned.

Despite bouts of great pain, which he was careful to conceal, Graham came with Joyce to our Witheridge reunion in Bovey Tracey in May 2007. Throughout the weekend he maintained his usual warmth and consideration for others, and when asked how he was he answered, ‘Oh, I’m all right, but more to the point, how are you?’, with the emphasis firmly on the ‘you’. This was typical of Graham, who was a true gentleman in every sense of the term, thoughtful, caring and considerate, with a genuine warmth towards all he met.

This warmth was sadly lacking in his own youthful experience. Born on 14 June 1924 in Luton, Graham was the youngest of three sons born to Harry and Mabel Browne. The two older sons, Bernard and Noel, were respectively ten and eleven years his senior.

Their father, a partner in Browne and Day, box manufacturers, was a decidedly taciturn man. Graham’s brother Noel recalled that he had reached the age of eleven before his father ever spoke to him! Graham himself reached that rare moment at a slightly younger age, but only to earn a rebuke. During a family holiday, the three boys were sitting in the dicky seat of the car, when a fidgeting Graham was told ‘Keep still boy, or you will have us over’!

After Graham’s birth, his mother suffered poor health, and Graham was frequently sent to paternal relations in Burnham Market, Norfolk, where his father and grandfather had been born and bred. Back at home, he went to Luton Modern (Grammar) school, but after the early death of his mother, with both brothers out at work, home life became increasingly bleak.

He continued to visit relations in Burnham Market, and found consolation in the beautiful countryside and its history. He enjoyed painting the local landscape and developed a considerable artistic talent. He also developed a strong interest in Horatio Nelson, who had been born in the next village of Burnham Thorpe, researching the life and exploits of the man who was arguably England’s greatest naval hero. Musically, Graham developed a strong interest in jazz, and at one point had his own drum kit and played in a local band.

Despite these consolations, Graham was keen to escape the bleakness of home life in Luton. When World War II started, he dreamed of flying in the RAF and, as soon as he was old

enough, volunteered for service with them and was accepted. However, he was allocated ground duties as a signaller, working on radio and later teleprinter sets. In this capacity he often worked with the Army, particularly in the advance across Europe after D-Day.

During this advance Graham's military career almost came to an ignominious end when his Sten gun mysteriously disappeared. Loss of a weapon was a court martial offence so, keeping a close guard on his replacement gun, Graham searched meticulously for his own, checking as many weapons as he could as the unit continued to advance. Eventually he found his gun in a cellar many miles further on but, as he retrieved it, was challenged by another man who claimed the gun was his. Having proved his ownership of the gun, Graham offered his replacement weapon in exchange, only for the other man to discover that this was his own original gun. With the exchange completed, two courts martial were avoided!

When he started work, Graham had joined the Public Health Department in Luton, where he met Joyce Witheridge, who was working in the Schools Health Department, and romance blossomed. Graham's military service made it difficult for them to fix a wedding date, but eventually they settled on 1 September 1945. Even this date was in doubt till the last minute, as Graham was still serving in Germany, and had to travel home by sea for his wedding leave. Delays and difficulties meant that Graham arrived in Luton on the night of 31 August, to great sighs of relief by all!



*Joyce and Graham at their home in Luton in February 2007*



After the wedding Graham had to return to Germany, but did manage to get home leave that December. While at home, he became ill, and wasn't well enough to travel back on the due date of 23 December. Unfortunately, the doctor put the wrong date on the certificate, so Graham altered it, and spent Christmas at home being nursed by Joyce. Once recovered, he reported back for duty, and earned seven days 'jankers', confined to barracks and given menial tasks, for altering the certificate.

While Graham continued his RAF service, Joyce lived with her parents in Luton, and when Graham was finally discharged in 1947 they continued to live there, struggling to save enough money to buy a house in those days of shortage. Graham was keen to gain qualifications in his chosen career in public health, but the training he needed wasn't available locally. For twelve years he travelled to evening classes in London three times a week, passing all his exams and eventually qualifying as an Environmental Health Officer.

By about 1955 they were able to buy their first house in Luton, and after a couple of moves eventually settled in Greenhill Avenue, where they lived for more than twenty years. Graham worked in the Public Health Department for over forty years, and after his official retirement continued to work part time at the Luton and Dunstable Hospital, as an adviser on food hygiene. He finally retired at the age of 72.



*The Drang, Witheridge, Devon by Graham Browne*

Joyce had long had an interest in her Witheridge family history, and had also added to Graham's knowledge of his family, building up a comprehensive family tree. In addition to their regular pilgrimages to Sussex Farm in Burnham Market, where his grandfather had been bailiff, they were then able to visit many other places in which Graham's family had lived. Graham enjoyed these visits, and continued painting the local landscape and churches. Like many artists who paint for their own pleasure, he preferred not to be watched, and would do the preliminary work on the spot, then take photographs and complete the work at home.

Graham also went happily to Devon on research trips with Joyce, joining her in churchyard explorations! He painted many Witheridge places in Devon that were dear to Joyce's heart, including her ancestral home at Ermington. At his death, Joyce had a collection of about a hundred of Graham's works, many of which had been accepted for local exhibitions, and all executed with meticulous care and considerable skill.

In 1986, when Annette Witheridge and I were trying to reach as many Witheridges as possible in order to start a family history group, Joyce was one of the first to make contact. On 1 May 1987 Joyce and Graham were at the first Witheridge meeting in West Wickham, Kent, and from that day forward both shared an enthusiasm for the Society. Throughout the next twenty years they attended almost every meeting, and hosted many informal gatherings in their own home, where we were always welcomed with great warmth and hospitality. All who met them at our gatherings soon developed a great affection for them. Both served the Society in an official capacity for over ten years, Joyce as Editor and Graham as Chairman—a post in which he combined efficiency with his usual gentle warmth.

The meticulous care Graham had shown in the search for his Sten gun, and in his paintings, was evident in other areas of his life. He had a great interest in cars, choosing his own vehicles with care, and ensuring that they were always immaculately clean inside and out, and scrupulously serviced at each specified date. Maintenance of their home was equally meticulous, and their garden combined a wonderful balance of colour and height, looking both natural and yet beautifully cared for. Graham filled their home with an impressive collection of beautiful antiques, including a wide range of porcelain, silver and glass, about which he was very knowledgeable, and of course plenty of Nelson memorabilia.



*One of Graham's many paintings*

Having continued his research into Nelson, Graham joined the Nelson Society, attending their annual Trafalgar Day reunions as often as possible. His expertise on Nelson became well recognised, and he gave lectures about him, even to naval gatherings—quite something for an Aircraftsman 1st Class! He also gave talks to the Witheridge FHS, and particularly enjoyed our reunion in Tenterden in 2002, when he was able to see where Nelson's daughter, Horatia, had lived for many years, and where two of Nelson's grandchildren were buried.

Graham was also a keen follower of cricket. Having played in his father's garden as a child, he put in a few appearances for a team of work colleagues, but his main interest was in the England team. He was enthusiastic about the test match teams of the 1950s and 1960s, but found many of the later teams disappointing. Even a few days before his death, he was following the test match from his hospital bed, knew the score, and expressed his opinion that the current England team was 'hopeless'!

Joyce and Graham enjoyed nearly sixty-two years of marriage. While there were times of sadness, it was a good marriage and they were both truly devoted and mutually supportive. Our hearts go out to Joyce in her loss. We too will miss Graham enormously, not just for what he did, but for who he was. Graham would often say that he wasn't really a Witheridge, but we all regarded him as not only one of us, but one of the best.

### ***'Thank You' from Joyce Browne***

I would like to say a heartfelt 'thank you' to all the members of the Witheridge Family History Society who sent messages of support and sympathy after the death of my husband, Graham.

Six members, Kim and Roy Cook, Brenda and Ron Dixon, and Beryl and Paul Witheridge attended the service at The Vale Crematorium in Luton on the 17th August, and their presence and support helped me through the day. I would like to say a special 'thank you' to all those members who sent donations in lieu of flowers. These went to the Pasque Hospice which is a Nursing Home for terminally-ill sufferers. It has a first class medical reputation and a wonderfully bright and informal atmosphere. In all, the Hospice benefited by £600.00. Graham would have appreciated that.

Graham had three operations for mouth and neck cancer which we thought had been eradicated, and I am so grateful that we were able to attend the reunion celebration at Bovey Tracey in May last. We were able to meet old friends and make new ones, and I know that Graham had happy memories of that visit.

I shall try to hold on to memories of that happy time, and of the help and kindness you have shown me.



## **Raymond Arthur Edwin Witheridge** **26 February 1920 – 7 June 2007**

*A tribute to an ordinary man. By Paul Witheridge*

*My father was no famous general, politician or celebrity.*

*But to me, he was not ordinary, he was my father—a larger-than-life figure. I remember trying to style my hair exactly the way he did; I remember him coming to my bedroom late at night when I was ill and coughing badly; I remember him scouring the town for a special toy that I wanted for Christmas; I remember him walloping me when I ran away from home after a big argument; I remember him teaching me to drive with almost no arguments; I remember...*

*He was my father.*

Raymond Arthur Edwin Witheridge (Ray) was born in 1920, in Oxford, third of four children. His parents were Arthur Witheridge and Florence Rose Filer Rugg.

As a boy, he attended the St Philip and St James Church of England school (as I did, many years later, even taking classes from the same schoolmaster, Mr Dent) and sang in the ‘Phil & Jim’ church choir, as his father had done.

There were three grand passions in his life: cycling, swimming and flying.

First, in his teens, he was mad about cycling. He joined the Oxford Road Club and thought nothing of cycling a couple of hundred miles in a day. He won two awards for distance time trials. In 1938, he toured Germany with a friend from the club—they almost got into serious trouble for laughing at one of Hitler’s diatribes.

He also met his future wife (and my mother), Kathleen May Collett (Kathy), through the cycle club, and they were married, by special license, on the day World War II was declared: 3 Sept 1939.

With the coming of war, he joined the RAF. Initially assigned to the quartermaster’s staff, he later moved on to ground crew and then volunteered for pilot training. He was sent to South Africa to learn to fly, and subsequently flew Wellington bombers in the Middle East and Lancasters on bombing missions over Germany. He was one of the lucky ones, who survived, but the experience left a terrible



*Ray Witheridge, 1944*

mark on him and he suffered nightmares about the war for the rest of his life. However, he discovered he was a ‘natural’ pilot and out of this came his second, and probably greatest passion in life—flying.

After the war, Ray worked for his father in the Credit Trade. This was a bit like being a door-to-door salesman, but involved calling on the same ‘round’ of customers every week, taking their orders and delivering their goods. It was a very old trade (*aka* the ‘Tally Man’) and provided a much-needed service to those who could not travel, or did not want to travel, to the town-centre shops.

After a few years, he transferred to Reading, to manage another store in the same chain, but this did not work out as well as hoped, so in 1950, he moved to Parkstone, Dorset, and after working for others for a few years, started up his own Credit Trade business, centred on Weymouth, although he continued to live in Parkstone.

As a teenager, I went on the rounds many times with him and, in my late teens and college years, filled in when he went on holiday. He had the same customers for years and many became his personal friends—he was invited to their weddings and some even gave Beryl and myself wedding presents.

Ray was a member of the national Credit Traders Association and at one time its president. He had many friends in the trade, not the least being my father-in-law, Herbert Field, who was perhaps his closest friend until his death in 1975. Sadly, the trade is now defunct, swept away by universal car ownership, out-of-town shopping malls and credit cards, and Ray lost touch with his old colleagues in the trade.

Moving from Oxford to the coast allowed him to develop his third great passion: swimming. As a child, I remember that almost every sunny weekend, from spring to autumn, was a pilgrimage to the beach, either Studland or Branksome Chine. He even went swimming in the sea at Christmas!

He loved family parties, entertaining and seeing people enjoy themselves. The visits to the beach were often combined with barbecues in an old quarry in the Purbeck hills. These were barbecues before they became fashionable. We had real fires, in pits in the ground—none of your modern conveniences!

In 1967, Ray joined the Dorset Gliding Club and began a forty-year re-aquaintance with his passion for flying. He became one of the central figures in the club, serving as CFI, or Chief Flying Instructor, several times. He taught many people to fly with the same imperturbable talent that he taught me to drive. He made many friends through gliding both within and outside the UK.

In 1979, his wife, Kathy, was diagnosed with breast cancer. This hit him very hard, but she recovered well and, to celebrate, they visited us in the USA in early 1980. Ray celebrated his sixtieth birthday in Disney World, Florida. Can you picture two people, in their sixties, living it up on the Space Mountain roller-coaster?

The summer 1989 issue of *The Witheridge Times* carried a news item: ‘A gliding instructor and his pupil were taken to hospital with broken backs yesterday after they crashed on



*Reach for the sky*

take-off at Old Sarum Airfield, Salisbury, Wilts. The instructor, Mr Raymond Witheridge, 69, of Runnymede Avenue, Bournemouth, and Mr Arthur Poulton, 45, of Downton, Salisbury, were practising take-off by mechanical winch when the glider became detached from the winch and a wing touched the runway’.

Ray made a good recovery, but he was a dreadful patient and the hospital was really glad to see the back of him. 1989 was also the year that he and Kathy celebrated their golden wedding anniversary.

Unfortunately, Kathy suffered from asthma and, in the 1990s, it became chronic. In 1992, they joined the Bournemouth Disabled Swimmers Association, Kathy for the gentle exercise and Ray as a helper. Ray also combined this with the Gliding Club, organising gliding trips for the disabled.

Then, in 1996, Kathy’s cancer returned. Ray nursed her; looked after the house; did the cooking. I could only marvel at the sight of him producing a roast dinner!

Following Kathy's death in 1998, Ray continued as a helper for the disabled swimmers. He also volunteered to take the elderly on outings and served as a volunteer guide at the Bournemouth Museum of Aviation at Hurn. In the last decade of his life, he bought a bicycle and returned to the sport of his youth, often riding over thirty miles in a day. Even after his eightieth birthday, in 2000, he still cycled and glided, although he was now unable to fly solo. In 2003, after a serious and debilitating illness, he moved into the Talbot View Care home. He was very happy there. Family and friends visited him and took him out. He had some marvellous friends. He was taken swimming, gliding and out to eat.

For the last few years, Ray was a member of the Witheridge Family History Society and looked forward to reading *The Witheridge Times* and showing it to friends as 'something my son edits'.

He was planning to attend the Society's twentieth anniversary reunion in 2007, at Bovey Tracey, and was looking forward to swapping yarns with another member, Derek Glynn, who had been a member of the same RAF squadron (35 Squadron), when he developed a serious urinary tract infection that did not respond to antibiotics, and was admitted to the Royal Bournemouth Hospital on 14 May, just days before the reunion meeting.



Just before he went into hospital, I showed him the latest copy of the Society's magazine. He looked at it, then at me, and said 'Why don't you write an article about me?'.

I never thought that the article would turn into his obituary. He had never suggested anything like this before and, looking back, I wonder if he knew that the end was coming.

He retained his sense of humour to the end and amazed the hospital staff with this and with his stamina. The day before he died, he joked with his grandson about going out for a pie and a pint.

*Ray, on his eighty-sixth birthday in February 2006, at Porlock Weir, helping out on a scouting expedition to check out the 2006 WFHS Reunion venue*

## New Members



We have two new 'full' members and two new additional family members to welcome into the Society in the 2007–8 year.

We give a hearty welcome to all these and hope that they enjoy their membership.

One of the 'additional family members' (what a mouthful, but that's what we call them!) is, of course, my own, beautiful, baby granddaughter, Tia Rhianne Witheridge, who joins simply by being born! So, it is really the other three that I now need to write about.

### **Mr Derek Andrews**

6 Rougemont Close  
Higher Compton  
Plymouth  
Devon  
PL3 6QY

e-mail: [shirleyderek@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:shirleyderek@blueyonder.co.uk)

Derek joined, along with his wife, Shirley, at last year's reunion in Bovey Tracey. We had hoped by now to be able to publish a family tree, linking Derek into the Witheridge families, but it's proved more difficult than expected. Fingers-crossed, we shall be able to do so in the not too distant future.

Shirley, Derek, we are very happy that you join us. Welcome.

### **Mrs Nicola Jane Humphrey**

'Willow Cottage'  
12 Mill Lane  
Merstham  
Surrey  
RH1 3HQ

e-mail: [nicola.humphrey@gmail.com](mailto:nicola.humphrey@gmail.com)

Nicola joined earlier this year. She also provided details of her Witheridge ancestry going all the way back to Lion Witheridge in the sixteenth century. She is a member of the Ermington family and so related to many existing members, including Richard Witheridge (our chairman), Joyce Browne, Valerie Wells and Barbara Finemore.

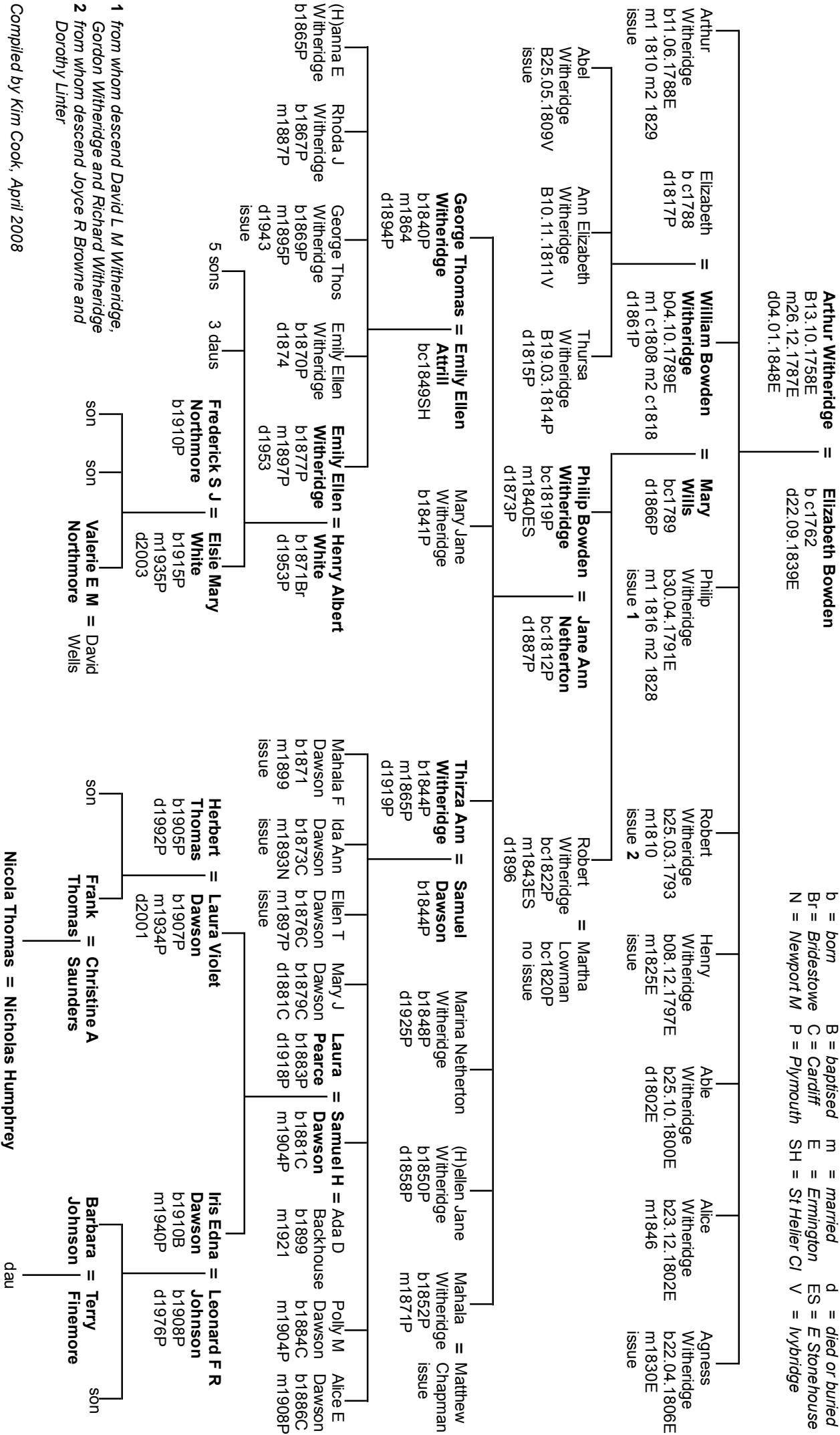
Overleaf, you will find a centre-spread chart of the Ermington and Plymouth Family Tree, compiled by Kim Cook, showing Nicola's descent from Arthur Witheridge and Elizabeth Bowden.

Nicola, I am very happy to welcome you to the Society. I hope you get a lot out of it!

# Ermington and Plymouth Family Tree

## Key

b = born      B = baptised      m = married      d = died or buried  
 Br = Bridestone      C = Cardiff      E = Ermington      ES = E Stonehouse  
 N = Newport M      P = Plymouth      SH = St Heller Cl      V = Ivybridge



1 from whom descend David L M Witheridge,  
 Gordon Witheridge and Richard Witheridge  
 2 from whom descend Joyce R Browne and  
 Dorothy Linter

Compiled by Kim Cook, April 2008



## **News from Australia**

*Judith and Allan Witheridge wrote from Figtree, Wollongong in New South Wales, enclosing 'The Figtree Witheridge Words for 2007', with lots of news about them and their family.*

You'll probably know the story about Alice (in Wonderland) and her first encounter with the white rabbit—he was racing along while looking at his watch and bemoaning the fact that he was late! Well, that describes me, except I'm looking at a calendar. Sorry about that, but there have been a few things go wrong in the latter part of this year. In recent months we've had the worst of electrical storms and in the first one we 'lost' two small television sets, and, worst of all, a new Apple Mac. I can't function very well without it! They have only recently been replaced, although I'm waiting on an external modem so that I can go onto the Internet and to the e-mail.

So, it's Christmas Time again and we've been very happy to hear from our annual contacts and know about their year too.

In many ways, 2007 had its traumatic times, but its ending is looking brighter. We don't know what we would do without son no. 1 (Greig) and his varied areas of expertise, he's such a clever cluey fellow! And he lives close by! While the other 'boys' are very supportive of course, they know exactly what we mean.

Our outings have been curtailed quite a lot. Allan is not always as mobile as he'd like to be and after I was diagnosed with breast cancer in August (yep, I've joined the club), I had to be available for appointments and treatment and everything else that goes with it.

However we have been able to do a little out of the ordinary. Our friends Linda and Tony, from the UK, have a daughter living in Australia, and were out here for some time, so we met up at the Gold Coast and had two weeks together. (I took a nasty tumble the day before we left—council really should be walker-friendly.)

We also enjoyed the biannual Air Show at Avalon (Victoria), because our friend, Phil, is fascinated by flight and so we all went. It was great, especially going to Point Cook, where Phil presented photographs that had belonged to his father (an ex-attende) to the museum there, which was delighted to have them and appreciated their historical significance. We managed to get to see the big Queen Mary II and were impressed, and glad we went by public transport—we usually do, if we're going into the city. We drive to Waterfall and get the Bondi Junction train—very handy. Our Witheridge Get-Together was on a lovely day in May and a good attendance meant a good time was had by all. Then ditto for my Mum's family, an annual catch-up with my cousins etc., always a pleasure to see them all. By the way, our house 'landmarks' have gone. We had the poplar trees removed after advice from Integral Energy. There were a few homeless 'possums around for a while. We were glad to see them go: both the trees and noisy nocturnal animals.

Greig and Karen and boys (men!) are still in their same jobs, Dean (nearly 24) and Joel (22) doing their own thing—and still at home! They know when they're on a good thing! Greig

and Karen have enjoyed every spare moment in their van, mostly at Moruya Heads. They had a holiday on Moreton Island (Queensland) and Greig had a wonderful experience going across the Simpson Desert in July (Karen said ‘no thanks’).

Neil and Rowena have had their usual too-busy year, although the family managed to enjoy a snowy holiday at Jindabyne. Rowena has finished up as the roving support teacher at Westmead Public School so will be ‘she doesn’t know where’ next year. Neil, who is the project manager on a specific internet thing at Macquarie University, has travelled to other Universities in Australia with presentations on it. Their extensions are lovely but there are still some things to be completed, much to their disappointment. They would have had the family on Christmas Day but will try again in 2009! Their children have all had fantastic reports this year again. Katherine (Kate) is into Year 12 work now, ready for the work ahead in her final year. We went to her Assembly at the Opera House (won’t mention the tumble I took there, either, except that road surfaces are unforgiving on one’s face!) We saw her get a silver Duke of Edinburgh award and one for her work in ISCF (Inter-School Christian Fellowship). She has passed her Grade 5 piano, and played indoor soccer. Tim has just completed Year 8 and we enjoyed his joining the International Brass Band champions of 2007, playing the trumpet, (he’s passed Grade 5 too) at the Epping Boys’ Assembly at Sydney Town Hall. Tim also played soccer in season. Academically he excelled. As for Phillip (Pip), he has had a fantastic year at Epping West and received an Academic Excellence award as well as Epping Rotary’s John William Langston Award for Citizenship. He’s very sporty but mostly with soccer and cricket—the ‘beautiful games’—and we watched his winning soccer grand final match. He’s a trumpeter too. We’re sure he’ll be an asset to Epping Boys’ High School. Also we have loved cat-sitting for them on occasion.

Ian and Silvana have had their usual year except that Ian missed out on attending the Rugby Union World Cup. His financial trip overseas didn’t happen this year, due to the downturn and uncertainty in the money market, so no-one was trading. He usually manages to coincide it with some international sporting event! Matt, who’ll be going into Year 9, has been a top student too, who seems to concentrate mainly on his computer (don’t they all?) He continues his interest in cricket as a bowler and does some private coaching on the side. Then there’s tennis in winter. He topped Year 8 mathematics at Figtree High. Giverny is off to Figtree High School with him next year. After an ‘exemplary’ time at Primary School she finished the year with Academic Excellence and the Rotary award for Citizenship—just like cousin Phillip! She does tap and jazz dancing all year—we loved her Dancing Academy Concert—plus netball in winter and tennis in summer.

Paul and Sonia have had a ‘different’ year. Paul finished up work in February and had eight months off, recovering from the affects of last year’s fall. He says he knows every grain of sand on Coogee Beach plus every rip, and every blade of grass in Centennial Park! It was good timing, because Sonia had a shoulder operation in February and Paul was able to look after the boys as well as her. They had a further extension of bedrooms and bathroom upstairs for Michael and Sebastian; it’s now a very big house! Mike is a great little sportsman too: soccer, Aussie rules football, cricket, swimming, while Seb likes to do his own thing. Any boy who stops to pick up and align the cones in a race isn’t taking it very seriously! Michael has



been described as ‘an asset to any classroom’, shining in PE, Art and Independent Learning. He’s going into Year 3 and moving to the Strathfield Campus. Seb will go into Kindergarten, remaining at Lewisham Campus with all his friends. He is reading exceptionally well. Like all of our grandchildren, they’re gorgeous!

So now I’ll close, (Paul says I’m the only one interested in them all, sorry), and if I don’t get around to commenting on your news, we’re always pleased to hear it.

God’s Gift is still the greatest ever given. May your Christmas be wrapped in the blessings of His love and care and everlasting arms, now and throughout 2008.

## ***News from Canada***

### **News from Sarnia, Ontario**

Kathy and Paul Witheridge are very proud to announce the birth of a great-granddaughter, Cali Julia Nicolle.

Cali was born on 10 March 2008 to their granddaughter, Erica Susie Witheridge.

Congratulations to the proud great-grandparents. (And of course to the parents and grandparents!)



*Cali at three days*

## **News from North Battleford, Saskatchewan**

*In January, Sharon Brydges e-mailed from North Battleford, in Saskatchewan, with news of her family:*

I drove to Kelowna, British Columbia, on 22 September 2007 (a fourteen hour drive) to help out my daughter work extra hours to maintain her physiotherapy license and finally arrived back in Saskatchewan on 14 November. Then on 27 November, my mum, my sister and I flew to Victoria until 6 December.

When I finally returned home it seemed like Christmas just came faster than I could get everything done that I wanted to. All our family came home for Christmas—a total of twelve of us. I ended up sick on Boxing Day and have been struggling ever since. I was finally diagnosed with pneumonia last week and was prescribed medication to which I was allergic, which really flattened me out. Then on Monday of this week, I was prescribed meds that were \$7.50 per pill, so if that doesn't cure me the price should shock the problem away!

Anyway, enough about me. During this time, Ted was also hospitalised for seven days.

Health permitting, I'm scheduled to fly to Kelowna on 22 January, to babysit, while my daughter and her husband attend a medical conference in Hawaii. So hopefully when I return at the end of February, I'll be able to focus on catching up on everything.

Think I'm rambling on—blame it on the meds! Anyway, best wishes for 2008.

*In April, she followed this up with some more news (along with some recipes for the WFHS Cook Book—thanks Sharon):*

We are waiting for spring to arrive here. We have had so much snow again this last week, rather unusual at this time of the year. My daffodils were just ready to open and we had approx 40 cm of fresh snow fall! I suppose the extra moisture will be good for the farm crops, which have really spiked in value this last year (but so have the costs!).

## **News from New Zealand**

*Velma and Rodney Metcalfe, wrote from Wellington, with Christmas Greetings and news of their year:*

As usual the threat of economy mail closure has sent us on a mission to review 2007—or what we can remember of it!

Our tired old bathroom was upgraded in March. Shortly after that our ancient washing machine died and we had to replace all the laundry whiteware, an expense we could have done without.

Around this time concern was growing for our lovely little cat, Chesca. She was becoming alarmingly thin and sure enough tests revealed widespread cancer. She is sadly missed.

Her absence was made easier because we weren't home for much of April. We spent over a week visiting my mother before heading to Mona Vale, in North Sydney.

Rodney's sister, planning a holiday in Bali, thought we might like to stay in her apartment & look after her two cats. This we did, while exploring the northern beaches and a nearby

national park. We also went to the Royal Easter Show along with one million others.

During this time we heard that my 91 year-old mother was in hospital. My sister and her husband drove five hours to be with her and then stayed until she could manage in her own home. We visited her again in October plus a short break in Martinborough.

I dropped to a four day working week in May and that worked well for a time. However, I have since fully resigned and am busy at home working through a huge list of things that needs doing. I intend to go back to work, but feel it won't be in retail.

Other family news: Rodney's other sister has had surgery and radiation treatment for breast cancer, but now seems to be recovering well. She was diagnosed while we were in Sydney.

Good movies we've seen this year include: *The Lives of Others*, *Atonement*, *Black Book*, *Vitus*, *The History Boys*, *Queen* and *As it is in Heaven*. Also enjoyed *Lassie*.

## **News from the UK**

### **News from Berkshire**

Tara and Andrew Witheridge, from Langley, Berkshire, have a new daughter: Tia Rhianne, who was born on 2 February 2008, weighing in at 9 lb 2 oz (4.14 kg), a new baby sister for Bethany, Caitlin and Thomas. Congratulations to Tara, Andrew and family.

*Note: Tia is also your editor's seventh grandchild—he's pretty thrilled too!*



*Tia Rhianne Witheridge at one month*

## Condolences

We send our heartfelt sympathy to Maureen Witheridge, whose mother passed away last November at the age of ninety-four. Maureen, one of our oldest members, is a member of the Society's committee and wife of our Chairman, Richard Witheridge. Condolences also to their family, especially to Jenny, Mark and James who are also Society members.

## News from the USA

*Anne Geddes-Atwell had a nasty tumble in October 2007. Jim penned an article for the local newspaper, the Cooperstown Crier. The article, dated 25 October 2007, is reproduced here:*

### Good friends to the rescue

Years of practice have made me good at afternoon naps. Flat on my back on the bed, a blanket pulled to my chin, and I'm gone for an hour. But last Saturday, as sleep closed in, I was shocked bolt upright: There was a crash, a dozen thumps, a cry of pain. I leaped up, grabbed my glasses, scuffed into shoes.

At the top of the stairs, my heart almost stopped. My Anne was lying at the bottom on her back, groaning and sobbing. She'd slipped and fallen down the whole flight.

At her side I asked where she was hurt. 'Ice!' was her answer. 'Ice!' She'd jammed a toe and bent a finger as she plummeted down on her back. Urging her not to move, I emptied trays and made two ice packs. 'Where else?' I asked. Through continued gasps, she said, 'Bottom of my spine.'

Anne is a woman with awesome pain tolerance. Without anaesthesia, she toughs her way through root canals, and even colonoscopies. That's why her sobs and groans really shook me. 'I'm calling 911,' I said, and she didn't object.

Two years ago, that call would have meant an anxious wait for the Cooperstown ambulance: our own fire department had let its first-responder unit fall apart.

Thank God, that's all changed. The new fire company has nearly a dozen first-responders on its roster, all of them with fresh, extended training.

Within five minutes after my call, the first help arrived: our friend Wolfgang Merk from right across Oaks Creek. Wolf's a contractor, but also a Cooperstown fireman and a skilled EMT.

'Wolf's pulling in the driveway,' I told Anne. 'Get the tissue box,' she said. 'Now I'm really going to cry.' And indeed she did (and I came close to it) as that calm, kind man knelt down beside her.

'My job, Anne,' said Wolf, 'is to hold your head motionless till the other guys get here with a neck brace and back board. If damage has been done, we don't want it made worse.' Wolf then lay on his stomach behind her head and held it steady, waiting.

But not for long. Within minutes, five Fly Creek first-responders had arrived, one driving their truck full of emergency equipment. As each of these neighbours arrived, their faces full of concern, our emotions welled again.

Here came Pam Deane, and then Matt Lionetti, Linda Coe, Pat Schultz, and Betty Staffin. Anne went through a lot of tissues.

With gentle skill, the crew got a neck brace on Anne, then rolled her to her side, slid the back board under her, and strapped her securely to it. At each small step in the procedure, they asked her to describe any change in pain. And, bless them, they also joked gently with both of us, easing our worry. Soon the Cooperstown ambulance arrived, and Kevin Preston and his team took charge of the case.

‘When they lifted me and carried me out to the ambulance,’ Anne said later, ‘it was like one of those trust-fall exercises, where you close your eyes and fall backward, trusting that the people behind you will catch you. No worry. I felt I was floating along in the best of hands.’

In our car, I followed the ambulance to an emergency room so busy that Anne and several others had to be parked on gurneys outside the regular cubicles. But friendly, familiar faces surrounded us there, too. Sam Hoskins, who’d once done fine work on Anne’s sprained knee, got extra blankets and spread them over her. He laughed warmly when Anne told him, ‘I didn’t bang the knee, Sam.’

Another Fly Creeker, Dr. Chuck Howarth, stopped by repeatedly to apologize for Anne’s being in the hall. Chuck, an engineer before medical school, is slowly changing the Fly Creek school-house into a home for himself, Jennifer, and their new baby. They’re living in the school-house as Chuck works on it, and he put us at ease with very funny stories about the experience.

After a bit, Anne was wheeled to x-ray, and then back and into a cubicle of her own. The films, thank God, showed nothing broken. ‘You’re just in for a very painful week or so,’ said the doctor. Relieved, we were handed the release papers and a couple days’ supply of industrial-strength pain capsules.

Then came a final kindness. When the nurse who brought a wheelchair saw that Anne had arrived without shoes, socks, or coat, he got socks for her and draped a blanket around her shoulders. ‘I’ll bring the blanket back tomorrow,’ I promised. He smiled and shrugged. ‘When you have time,’ he said.

Back home, Anne slept the night on the couch to avoid the stairs. The next day, the flood of kindness continued: telephone calls, visits, gifts of food. The capper was the arrival of Portabello Restaurant’s Josh Kantor with a hamper full of delicious meals for us.

Anne is up and hobbling around now (standing, she says, is far better than sitting); and she’s sporting blacks, blues, and maroons that would please a tattoo artist. Both of us are still awed by the outpouring of goodness by friends and neighbours.

When our British friend Michael Thrower faces effusive thanks for something he’s done, he always deflects any praise. He does it by imitating an English comic whose tag line for many jokes is a pious, cloying ‘People are kind.’

And indeed they are, Mike. They truly are.



## More news from Fly Creek

*Jim Atwell followed this up with some more news in a December newsletter:*

This is Jim, writing for the both of us. Usually Anne composes a note for us at Christmas time; this year, because I have something special to tell you, I've taken on the job. But Anne is keeping an eye of what I say. So don't think that I'm working without adult supervision.

The past year on the farm has been marked by all the usual seasonal tasks, with a couple of surprises. The rent-a-ram spent his usual month here before last Christmas, and that should have mean lambs in late April. In fact, the first arrived, triplets, shortly after New Year's day, and we had seven births within the next weeks. Chalk that up to precocious work by last year's ram lambs which, before heading off to 'summer camp', had left their mark on their own mamas. Embarrassing, but it happens in the best of families, we're told.

Anne's vegetable garden, 2,300 square feet, flourished magnificently this summer. Harvest time brought a dizzying bout of canning, freezing, drying, and pickling. The garden and the animals we raise makes us almost self-sustaining for food, and that fact has backed us into helping lead the local 'eat regionally and seasonally' movement.

Blue, the wonder dog, continues to flourish, racking up new achievements in agility class. He jumps barriers, runs through tunnels, rockets over A-frames and seesaws. Not much left for that dog to learn expect perhaps tap-dancing and card tricks. We get much pleasure from him and from Owen the cat, now fifteen but still spry.

This year we spent a lot of time in bookstores and libraries, hawking my book and prints of the fine drawings Anne did for it. Sales have been excellent, and the end of the first printing is now on Amazon.com. Anne's work as a town councillor continues to take up much time but with excellent results. She's become a respected local political figure and outshines Blue in accomplishments. I'm really proud of her.

We two celebrated our tenth anniversary with a month-long trip to England and Scotland, accompanied by our dear friends the Throwers. Barbara and Michael drove us from their home down on England's south coast, all the way north to the farthest wilds of Scotland, home to Anne's Geddes ancestors.

Anne found reams of new information about her family and brought home a knapsack full of facts and photos, including pictures of the stone croft where her great-great-great-grandparents sheltered both their children and their sheep. (No wonder Anne's so at home with our animals and with me!) That croft backed up on a broad field with the North Sea just beyond it. Winter winds must make that spot pretty bleak through the cold months. A good heritage, you see, for her life in Fly Creek. Of course she's flourishing here. It's in her genes!

Now, that special piece of news: On that wonderful trip we noticed telltale tremors in my hands that proved to be first symptoms of Parkinson's Disease. The diagnosis has since been confirmed, and we're coming to terms with some future major changes in our lives.

Parkinson's is not a fatal disease, but it's chronic and progressive. The problems I'm now having with sense of balance and with spasms in arms and torso will surely intensify; and my swallowing, speech, and even cognition may also be affected. The last-mentioned haunts me

most of all, since I've spent my life communicating in writing and in speech. And I don't know what effect the changes will have on my work as a Quaker minister, which has had me counselling in jails and speaking from pulpits across the state.

But we'll deal with necessary changes, we two together. When I said to my bride, 'I don't want to become a burden on your life!' she answered at once, 'You are my life.' How's that? I don't know how I got this woman, but thank God I did.

And thanks to God, too, from both of us, for all of you, family and friends, scattered across several countries and a couple continents. Even if we don't get to see some of you very often, we take joy in the thought of you. I'm convinced that love, which so contradicts us humans' inborn selfishness, is the strongest clue of the divine among us. I think the love we give and receive is God's, placed in our hands to share. And Anne and I are enriched by a lot of it, coming from all of you.

So that's our Christmas wish, dear ones: Lots of love, right back at you!

*Anne and Jim, we are so sorry to hear your 'special' news and you are in our thoughts.*



*Anne and Jim Attwell at their home in Fly Creek, NY*

# Street of Memories



By Joyce Browne

Making a comment on a picture of New Street, Plymouth, featured in *The Witheridge Times*, summer 2007, our editor wrote ‘It doesn’t look that new, does it?’

New Street did not look new a hundred years ago, two hundred, three hundred or even four hundred! It was newish in 1588 when Sir Francis Drake was playing bowls on Plymouth Hoe as the Spanish Armada sailed up the Channel.

It was originally cut to serve as a highway from Sutton Harbour, Plymouth, up to the Hoe—a plateau with a magnificent view of the sea which served as a town meeting place for games, executions, and other crowd pulling attractions.

Drake knew as he played his game that he had plenty of time to finish, as the tide was out and the wind against him. He may well have used New Street to return to his ship, the *Revenge*, although the *Revenge* was too big for Sutton Harbour and was anchored further round the bay.

If Drake did not frequent New Street, some of his captains certainly did. The street is full of Elizabethan houses built for the adventurous mariners who sailed with Drake and other captains of fame such as John Hawkins, Frobisher and Sir Walter Raleigh. In more recent times New Street declined and suffered deprivations from developers until a preservation society succeeded in preventing the destruction of its beautiful domestic buildings and warehouses.

One man who appreciated New Street enough to buy a house there was William Bowden Witheridge, born in Ermington in 1789, the son of Arthur Witheridge and Elizabeth Bowden. By 1826 he was living in Plymouth. A millwright by trade, in 1834 or 1835 he was a Burgess of the City of Plymouth and, at a time when not everyone had the franchise, was permitted to vote in Parliamentary elections ‘by reason of his property in New Street’.

William Bowden Witheridge seems to have been a man of enterprise. In 1826 he applied for a victualler’s licence for a property in Clarence Street (it’s not known if this was granted) and he owned property in South Side Street (which is near New Street) and at How Street.

The census of 1841 reveals that William was then living in South Side Street. In 1851 he and his family were living in Higher Batter Street and 26 New Street was occupied by the Crees family, the Rambridge family and other boarders, ten persons in all, and one visitor—a fish dealer from Exeter—maybe he had business with the fishermen of Sutton Harbour.

In 1861, when he died, William was living in How Street and had been engaged in several business enterprises—a man of the entrepreneurial spirit which had caused New Street to be built over three centuries before.

One other Witheridge with a connection to New Street was Joseph Fred, son of William James Witheridge and Mary Ann Walters, but the connection seems to have been brief, and to us, puzzling. Joseph Fred’s birth certificate shows that he was born at No.16 New Street on 21 June, 1881, but the 1881 census does not show any Witheridges living in New Street. Mary Ann Walters’ family lived nearby, but I cannot find Joseph Fred and his family anywhere on



the 1881 census. Later they re-surface in Plymouth and we know the subsequent history of Joseph Fred and his family, but nothing which leads us back to New Street. Perhaps someone will take up the trail?

*Note: in this issue, we are welcoming a new member, Nicola Humphrey, who counts William Bowden Witheridge among her ancestors, see pages 28 and 29 for the family tree—Ed.*



*New Street from across the harbour. Number 26 is in the centre of the photograph and can be identified by the circular sign hanging outside.*

# Telephones and Tombstones

BT has put its entire archive of old phone books online for genealogists, or anyone else, to browse, and a commercial genealogy company is opening up access to all UK burial records since 1538.

The phone books date back to 1880 and contain 280 million names. They can be used to track down relatives, but you can also use the service to find out if your house has ever had any famous, or infamous, residents.

The first phone book contained 248 names but no numbers—callers were expected to call the operator to get connected.

Early editions also included advice on using the phone and phone etiquette: ‘Answer promptly and announce your identity at once upon receiving a call.’ The phone book to cover the whole country was published in 1896 and had 81,000 numbers in a single volume of just 1350 pages. A century or so later, the phone book had grown to 145 editions and 47 million copies were distributed.

The first telephone exchange was in the City of London and had seven subscribers. Within a year this had rocketed to 6,000.

All books before BT’s privatisation are public records. The service is available through [ancestry.co.uk](http://ancestry.co.uk).

If 1880 is too recent a period for your searches, another genealogy site has opened up access to all UK burial records dating back to 1538—the year that Henry VIII was excommunicated from the Catholic Church.

A spokeswoman for [findmypast.com](http://findmypast.com) said: ‘Previously, we had records from the central births, marriages, and deaths register which dates back to 1837. Before that it was done parish by parish and those are what we are transcribing.’

## **On the side: Turkeys**

An industrious turkey farmer was always experimenting with breeding to perfect a better turkey. His family was fond of the leg portion for dinner and there were never enough legs for everyone.

After many frustrating attempts, the farmer was relating the results of his efforts to his friends at the general store get together.

‘Well I finally did it! I bred a turkey that has six legs!’

They all asked the farmer how it tasted.

‘I don’t know,’ said the farmer, ‘I never could catch it!’

# How I Acquired a Criminal Record

My late, dear husband, Graham, was a collector and a hoarder. He came from a family of hoarders and their junk and ours filled our roof space. After Graham died I realised that the attic had to be cleared, and friends and relations rallied round to help. We felt very organised as the youngest, fittest man went up through the trap door into the roof space and passed items through a chain of waiting hands down the stairs and out into the garage. I was at the bottom of the stairs.



*By Joyce Browne*

Suddenly there was a thud and the bottom fell out of an old box and several items hurtled down the stairs. One flew through the air, and without thinking I stretched out my arm and made a left handed catch which would have done credit to any cricketer. I had caught a hand grenade! The pin was still in place but it was very rusty and presumably could have detonated.

The other items were: two small hand guns; several rounds of rifle and Sten gun ammunition; an object which I thought was a Very light flare (used for distress signals), but turned out to be an anti-tank missile (not primed); and a fearsome, jagged-edged bayonet in a handsome black leather scabbard trimmed with silver, which was an accoutrement of a German officer's dress uniform.

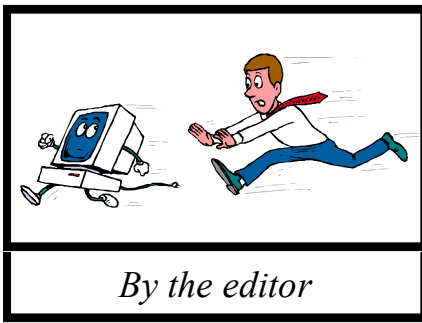
What to do with them? They couldn't be thrown into the dustbin and, as the police often announce an amnesty for anyone who hands in offensive weapons for disposal, my friend Bob offered to take them to the police station in the centre of town. This he did, some days later, and waited patiently in reception with the goods in a plastic bag. Eventually his turn came to go to the desk, he presented his bag to the sergeant in charge, ready with his explanation. Before he could say a word the sergeant turned pale, slammed his hand on a panic siren, shouted for assistance and pushed Bob into a cell.

Luton police station was evacuated and the surrounding streets were closed, causing mayhem in the town centre. Then they realised that if they left the suspected terrorist in the cell and the police station blew up they would not be able to question him, so they brought Bob out and began to interview him. He soon convinced them that—as they put it—he had 'no evil intent', but of course he had to give them my name and address as the source of the offensive weapons.

The centre of Luton was disrupted for hours until the bomb disposal unit, summoned from Colchester some seventy miles away, dealt with the situation. The bayonet is still at the police station.

The police were satisfied that I also 'had no evil intent' and I was told that if I discover anything else of a dangerous nature in the roof space I am to call the fire brigade immediately.

Readers need not fear that the escapade has sullied the family name—the police only know me as 'Browne'!



# Using Your Computer to Search PDF Documents—Part II

Part I of this series appeared in Volume 20 Number 3, the winter 2006 issue of *The Witheridge Times*. It concentrated on explaining what PDF, or *Portable Document Format*, files are and the basics of searching them for a specific phrase of text. It also

pointed out the difference between text (which can be searched) and graphics (which cannot), the effect being that you cannot find textual references in pictures or diagrams.

This article looks a little closer at *Adobe Reader*, which is the tool that most of you would use to display, print or search a PDF. There are other tools, but *Adobe Reader* is free, easily downloadable and available for both Windows, Mac OS, Linux and several other flavours!

If you haven't got it, get it from [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com).

If you have got it, check it's the latest version (version 8.1.2 at the time of writing). This is quite important—you may not be interested in the new features that updated versions bring, but updates also fix 'vulnerabilities' which otherwise might allow malicious software to attack your computer. You can check for updates via the Adobe Reader *Help* Menu.

## ***Why should you, as a genealogist, be interested in PDFs?***

More and more material is being published in a digital format and the *Portable Document Format* is the most commonly-used format for lengthy material such as magazines. Some are available in both printed and electronic forms, but others are abandoning the printing press and going for online publishing only. For example:

- The Federation of Family History Societies (FFHS) no longer sends out a printed copy of its magazine. Instead, its 'ezine' is available, as a PDF, for anyone to download from its website at [www.ffhs.org.uk](http://www.ffhs.org.uk).
- The Guild of One-name Studies (GoONS) have created an archive CD containing the first one hundred issues of their journal in PDF format. It's for sale via their website at [www.one-name.org](http://www.one-name.org) and later issues are available from their online 'Members Room'. However, at present they are continuing to publish a printed version.
- We, ourselves, have created an archive CD containing the first twenty years of *The Witheridge Times* and later versions are downloadable from the *Members Only* area of our website at [www.WitheridgeFHS.com](http://www.WitheridgeFHS.com).

What's behind this migration to electronic and online publishing?

In some cases, it's just cost. We could save around £400 per year if we just published *The Witheridge Times* via the Internet—but then we couldn't curl up in our favourite armchair with the little green mag and a mug of cocoa, could we!

In other cases, it's about storage. I can store thousands of electronic copies of magazines and other documents on my computer. I'd need a much bigger house and lots of bookshelves to



keep printed copies. What's more, the electronic copies don't get dog-eared or covered in coffee stains! (I do however, keep back-up copies in case my computer gets trashed.)

But, the biggest advantage is that we can let the computer do the searching when we want to track down an elusive reference. It's better and more thorough than having an index. It can also be extremely frustrating, but I would argue that it's less so than being surrounded by pile upon pile of magazines to scan through!

So, if computers are taking over the world and PDFs are king, it behoves us to look at how to take advantage of Acrobat Reader's ability to search them.

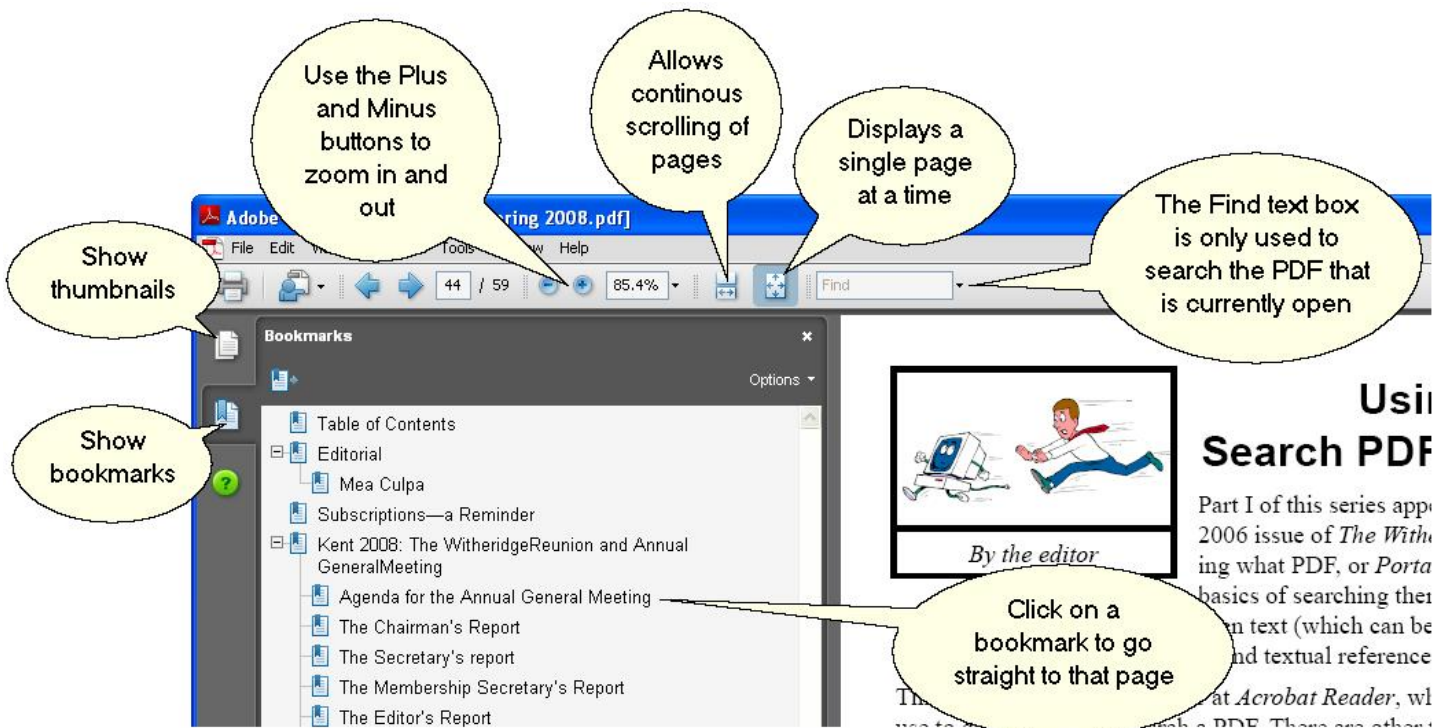
## Viewing and searching the currently open PDF document

The most common use of *Adobe Reader* is to read a particular document. Double-click on the document in the folder window; Adobe Reader starts up and opens the document.

The picture at the foot of the page shows some of the useful features of Adobe Reader. First, notice the bookmarks down the left hand side of the page. Clicking on one of these will take you directly to the page in question. Alternatively, you can choose to display thumbnails instead of bookmarks. They're not much use unless you can recognise pages easily—for example by a picture, diagram or major heading—but they're better than nothing if the author of the document did not create any bookmarks.

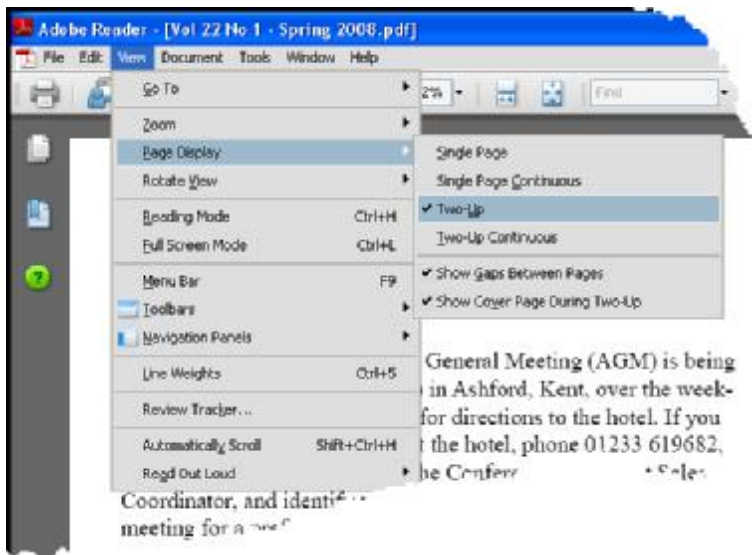
A great feature of Adobe Reader is the ability to zoom in and out—it beats getting out the magnifying glass any day! Click the *plus* button to zoom in or the *minus* button to zoom out. You can also use a combination of the *Ctrl* and *+* or *Ctrl* and *-* keys to achieve the same thing.

The current zoom is shown in the box at the side of the buttons. You can type an actual zoom percentage in here, or click on the little down triangle, at the right, for more options.



Further to the right are the two buttons for controlling the scroll mode. You can opt for continuous scrolling or for one page at a time.

- In *continuous scroll* mode, the document scrolls about one line at a time when you press the up or down cursor (arrow) keys and parts of more than one page can be displayed on screen at the same time.
- In *single page* mode, only one page is displayed at a time and the displays move to the previous or following page when you press the up or down cursor keys—good if you have a big enough screen to show an entire page and still be able to read it.



There are more view options on the *View* menu. One of my favourites is two-up, which is selected from *Page Display* in the *View* menu (see picture at the left).

This allows you to view two pages, side-by-side, which mimics what you see if you are looking at the actual printed magazine (make sure you also have *Show Cover Page during Two-Up* checked, or you won't get the left and right pages properly paired up). It's also best to close the bookmark/thumbnailed part of the window, to make maximum width available for viewing the two pages side-by-side.

Another useful option is *Full Screen Mode*, which only shows one page at a time, but makes maximum use of the screen. You can select it from the *View* menu (use *Esc* to exit full-screen mode) or, more conveniently, you can flip in and out of full-screen mode by pressing *Ctrl* and *L* together. Once in full-screen mode, use the up and down cursor keys to move to the previous or following pages.

You may also come across pages that need to be rotated to view them properly—there is one in this magazine if you are viewing it as a PDF. Another handy option on the *View* menu will rotate the page left or right by 90°. Alternatively, you can use *Ctrl*, *Shift* and *-* keys or *Ctrl*, *Shift* and *+* keys (pressed together) to perform the left or right rotation.

To the right of the scroll-mode buttons is the *Find Text Box*. This is used to search within the document. Press the *Ctrl* and *F* keys together to move the cursor to the box (or just click in the box). Enter the text you want to find and press the *Enter* key.

To find the next occurrence of the text, press the *F3* key (or use the *Find Previous* and *Find Next* buttons at the right of the *Find Text Box*).

*Note:* You may find that the *Find Text Box* (no pun intended) is missing. Don't worry, pressing the *Ctrl* and *F* keys, together, will bring it back. You can also switch it on and off via the *View* menu *Toolbars* options.

## Searching through multiple PDF documents

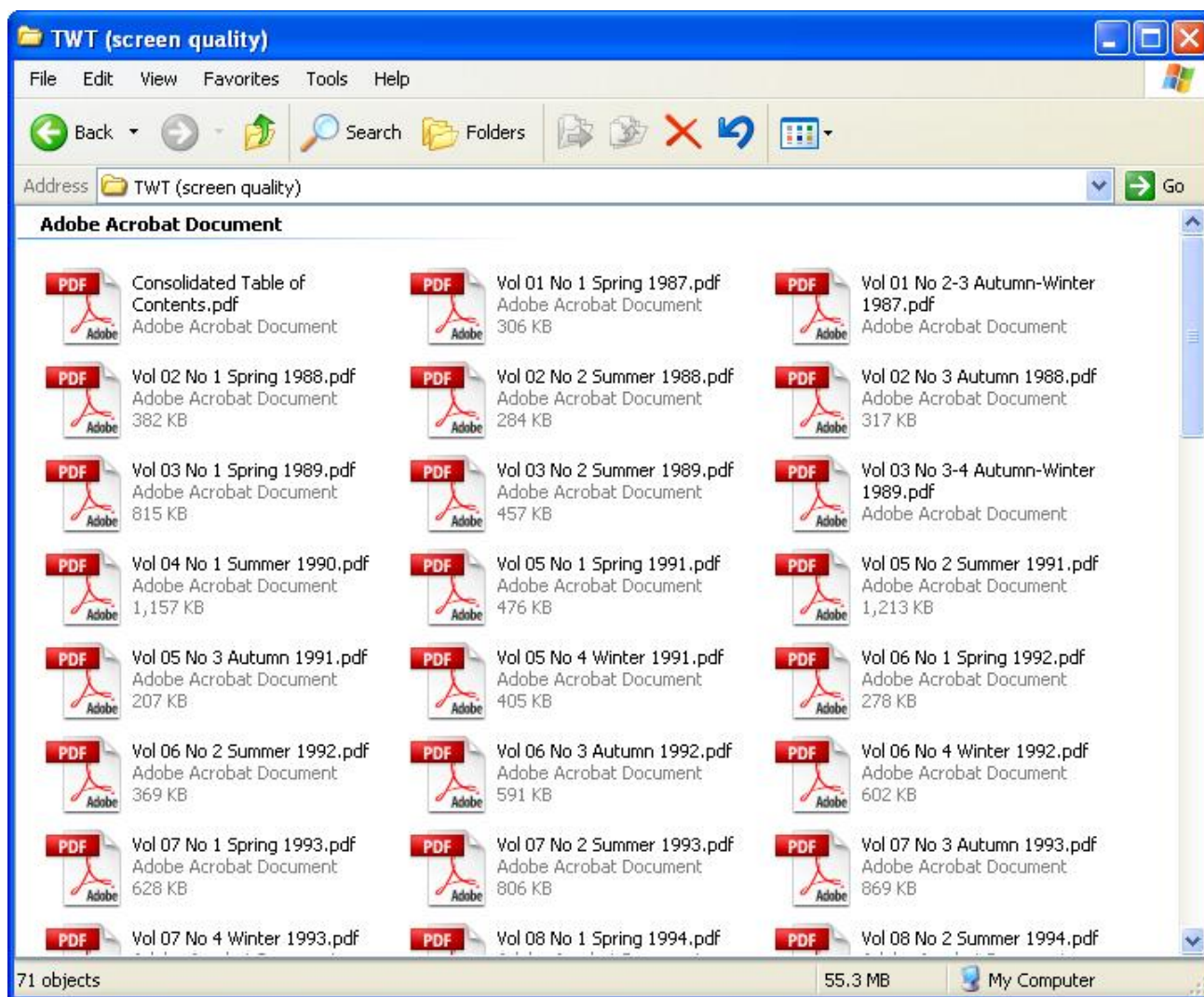
The picture at the bottom of the page shows a (Windows XP) folder containing PDFs of every issue of *The Witheridge Times*, from Volume 1 Number 1 in 1987 to Volume 21 Number 2 in 2007. That's sixty-eight issues plus the *Consolidated Table of Contents*.

I copied the entire folder from the latest WFHS Archive CD to *My Documents* folder (so now it's a sub-folder of *My Documents*).

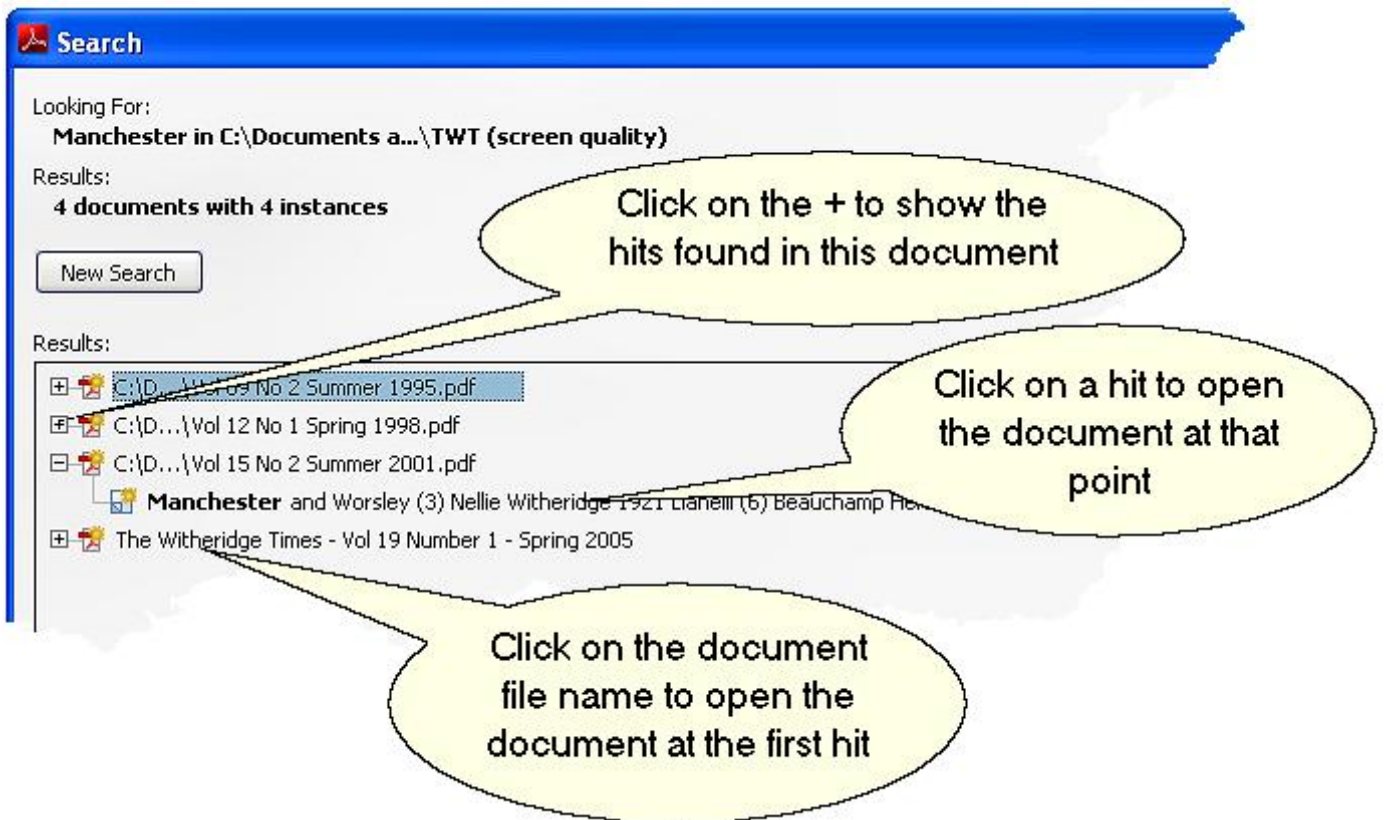
*Note:* There are two archive folders on the CD: one contains 'screen-quality' PDFs, the other, 'print-quality' PDFs. It's the folder of *screen-quality* PDFs that you copy to *My Documents* on your hard drive. It takes up less space and is perfectly adequate for viewing the PDFs on screen.

Now, if I wanted to search for references to, say, 'Manchester', I *could* open each PDF in turn with *Adobe Reader*, enter 'Manchester' in the *Find Text Box* and search each document individually.

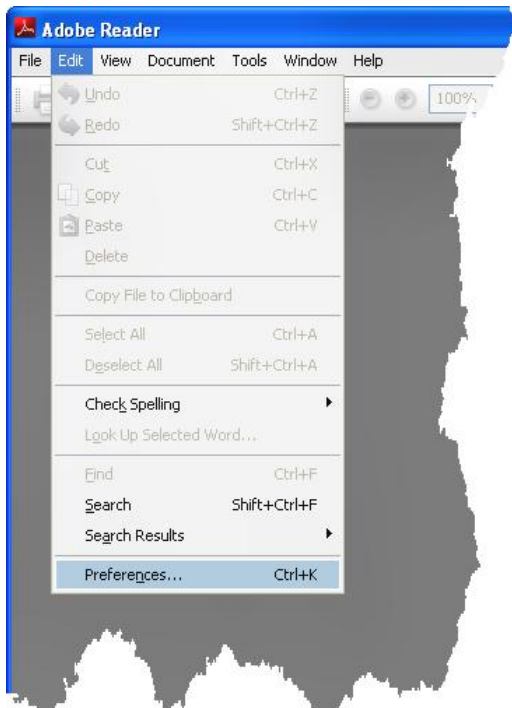
However, that would be a serious waste of my time. Instead, I should be using *Adobe Reader's* facility to search all the PDFs in a specified location. We'll get on to 'how to do this' a little later, but at the moment, just look at the result, which is shown at the top of the next page. It only takes a few seconds to search all the PDFs (depending on the speed of your PC)







and, as you can see, the word ‘Manchester’ only occurs in four of the documents. What’s more, by clicking on the ‘+’ in the little box (or on the ► for Mac OS), you can expand the entry for a document to show a list of all the instances, or *hits*, of ‘Manchester’ found in that document. This will help decide if you want to look at those hits in detail. *Note:* a really useful short-cut for the *Search* results is to press the *Shift* and \* keys together; this expands all the results in one go.



To open one of the documents for a more detailed examination, just click on the document’s file name to display it in *Adobe Reader*, already positioned at the first hit. Alternatively, clicking on one of the lines in the expanded list of hits will open the document at that point.

Another useful technique is to use the *Ctrl* and *G* key combination, which takes you to the next hit, opening the next document if needed. Use this, repeatedly, to examine each instance in turn.

So far, so good—but the down side is that *Adobe Reader* never **closes** any of the documents and you will soon end up with your screen covered with far too many open windows!

There is a couple of things you can do to manage this. First open *Adobe Reader* preferences via the

*Edit* menu (see above left) or by pressing *Ctrl* and *K* together. Then, select *Document* from the

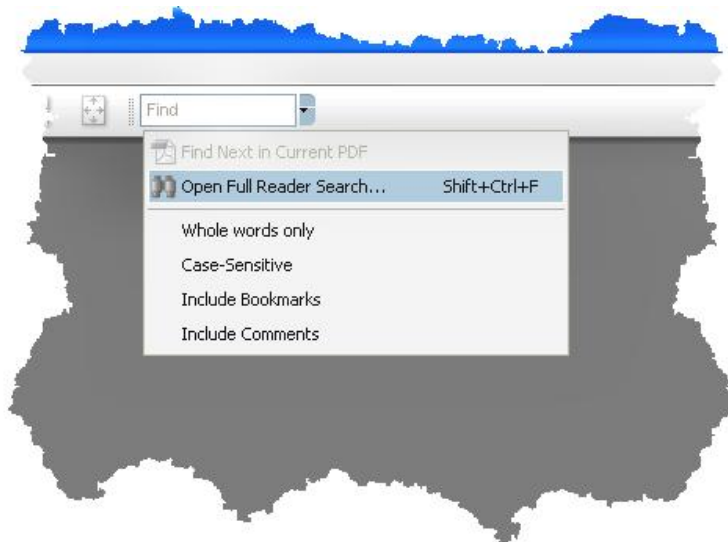
list at the left of the *Preferences* window and turn off the setting to show each document in a separate window. This does not reduce the number of open documents you end up with, but it does keep them a lot tidier.



It's also kinder to your computer to keep down the number of open documents, so it doesn't have to struggle to fit them all into its memory. It's easy to close them, just press *Ctrl* and *F4* together, repeatedly, until they're all gone! However, a word of warning: *don't* click on the big **✖** at the top right of the *Adobe Reader* window. This closes everything—the *Search* window as well! The number of times the air has turned blue after that I've done that by accident!

## Choosing the folder to search

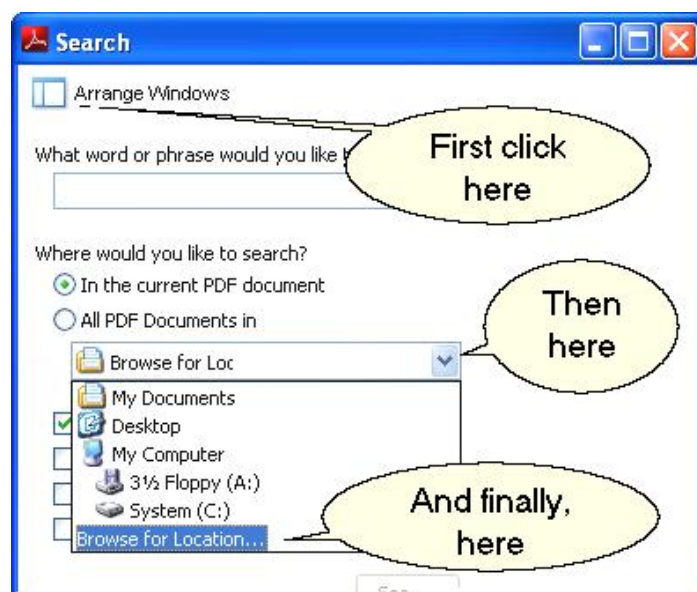
First open the *Search* window. You can do this by pressing *Ctrl*, *Shift* and *F* together, or by choosing *Search* from the *Edit* menu or *Open Full Reader Search* from the drop-down *Find* menu (see right—click on the down triangle at the right of the *Find Text Box* to display the menu).



When the *Search* window opens (see bottom right), the first thing to do is click on the *Arrange Windows* button at the top left of the window. This arranges the *Search* window on the left of your screen and the main *Adobe Reader* window on the right. It also adjusts the size of the windows so they fill the screen.

Next, click on the down arrow at the right of the box just under *All PDF Documents In*.

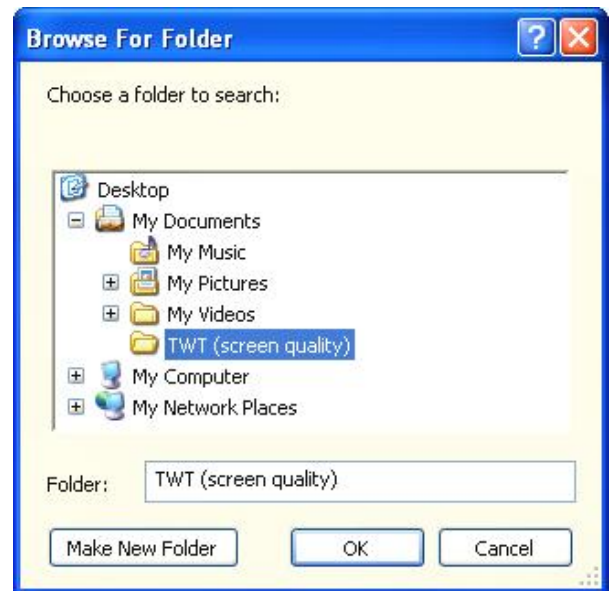
Finally, click on *Browse for Location...* at the bottom of the drop-down list that appears. This causes a *Browse for Folder* window to pop up (see top of facing page).



As you can see, I selected the folder called *TWT* (*screen quality*), which is the folder I copied from the archive CD of *The Witheridge Times*. The good thing is that you only need to do this once. Next time you will find your chosen folder at the bottom of the *Browse for Location...* drop down list.

## Performing the search

Now all you have to do is enter the text you want to search for and press *Enter* (or click on the *Search* button). In this case, if I had entered *Manchester*, after a few seconds the search results shown at the top of page 47 would appear.



Surely, it can't be quite that simple?

Well, of course, it's not. I cheated with my choice of *Manchester* as the text to search for—I knew that it didn't occur frequently throughout the sixty-eight issues of our magazine!

So, what about something more realistic? Suppose, instead of *Manchester*, I try to search for my infamous ancestor, *John Witheridge*, who married either two or three times: the result is 654 hits in 67 documents—that's a lot of hits!

My next step would be to press *Shift* and *\** to expand all the search results so I can see all the hits. At the same time, it's a good idea to, temporarily, maximize the *Search* window to fill the entire screen (using the middle button of the group at the top right of the window), so that I can see the full width of the text.

This certainly helps. For example, under *Vol 10 No 2 Summer 1996*, I can see a line which reads:

*John Witheridge, Bachelor, and Jane Emmet, Widow, both of this Parish were married in*

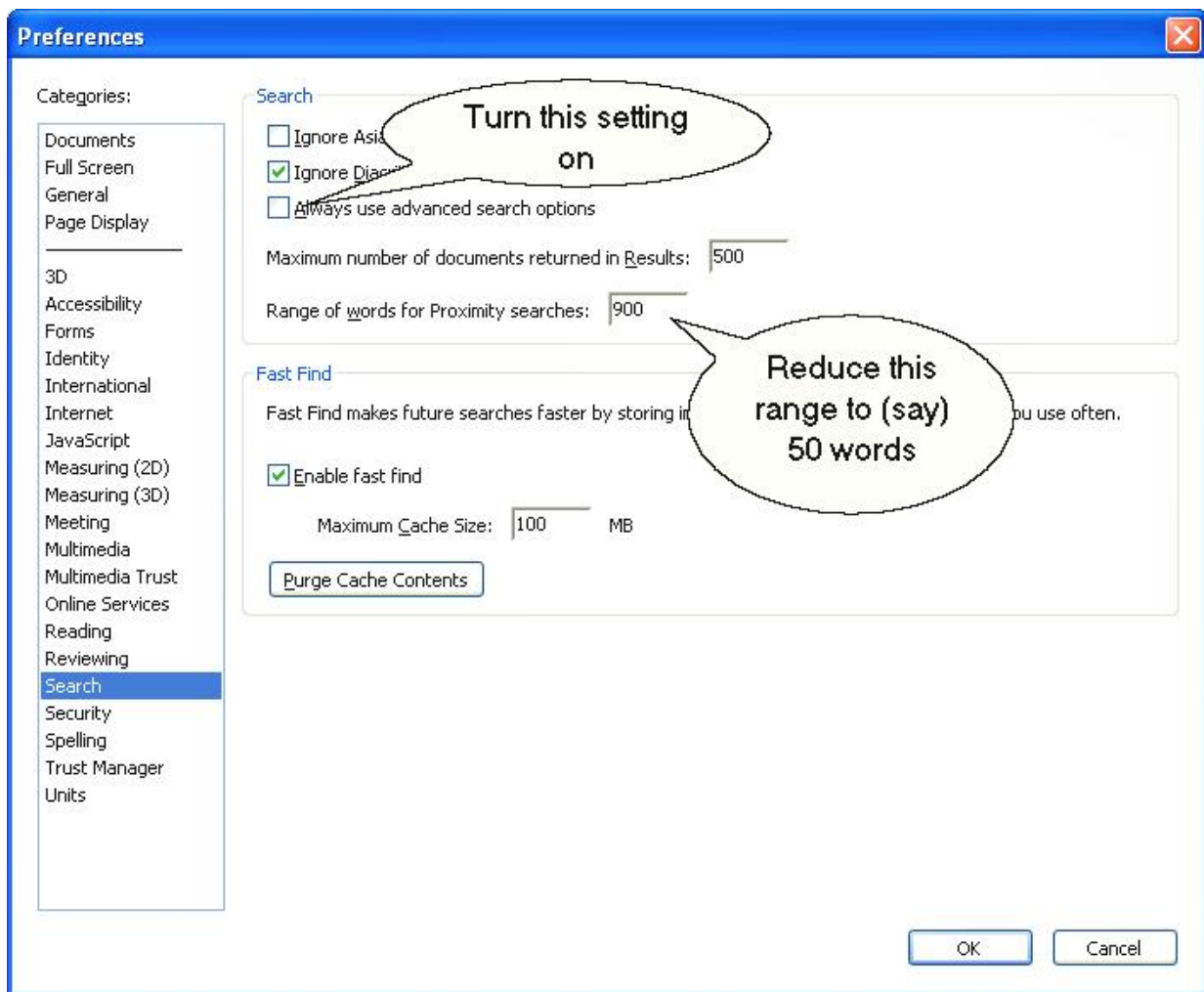
and, since I know that *Jane Emmet* is my great-great-great-grandmother, I can be certain that this is the right *John*. However, there are a great many other hits, some of which might also provide information about my ancestor.

I could, of course, take the brute force approach: start with the first hit and work my way through them, pressing *Ctrl* and *G* together to move forward to the next hit (and not forgetting to close the opened documents from time-to-time to take the pressure off my PC).

Still, there are 654 hits! Perhaps there is an alternative approach which can narrow the search down a bit!

There are two techniques which can help: *Refine Search Results* and *Advanced Search Options*. These can be selected from the bottom of the *Search* window by clicking on the corresponding line. These two options are not mutually exclusive and, in fact, I would like to suggest that you start by using *Advanced Search Options* all the time. This is a setting in the *Search Preferences*, which are shown at the top of the next page.





Turn on the setting to always use *Advanced Search Options*. I also recommend you reduce the *Proximity Range* from the default of 900 to a much smaller value, say 50. We'll see what that does in a moment.

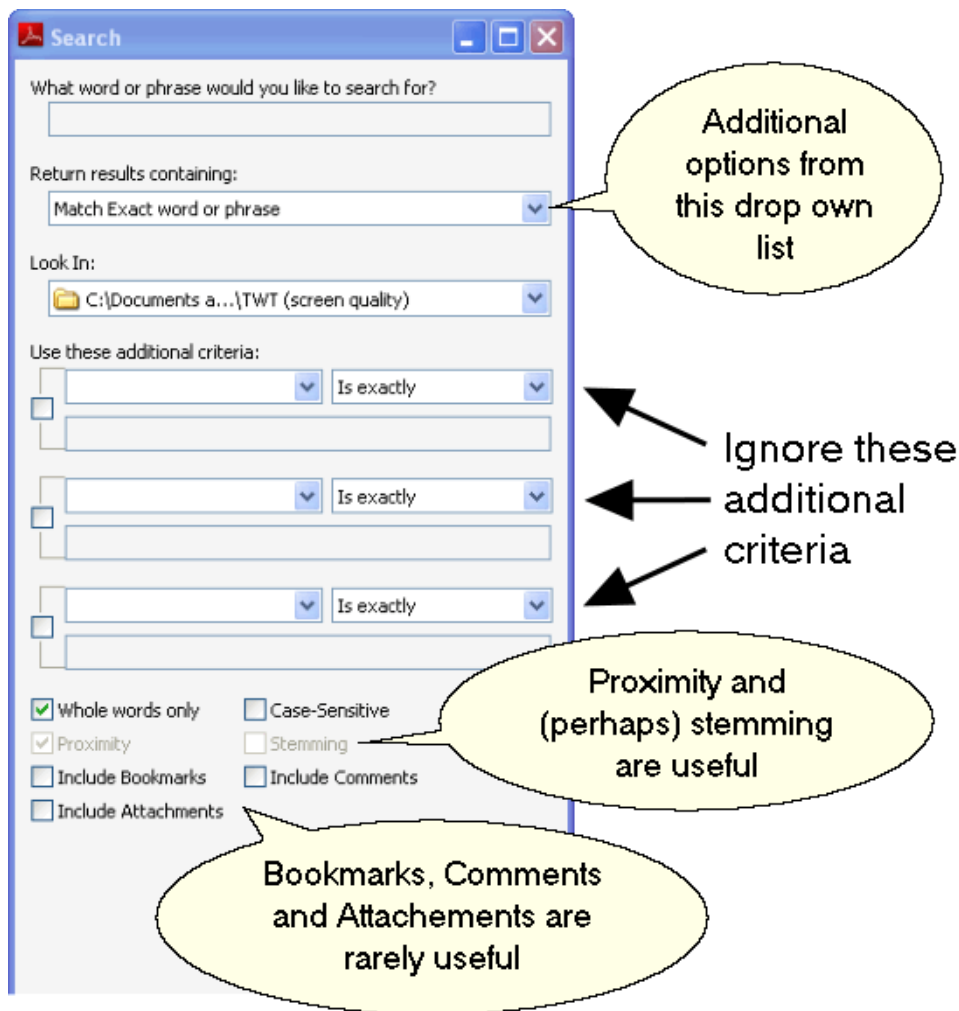
Note, also, that *Adobe Reader* uses a *cache* to speed up searches. This means that subsequent searches of the same set of documents will be much faster than the first. It also means that *Adobe Reader* is storing bits of your data *somewhere*. This is something to think about if you start searching confidential documents.

Now when you press *Ctrl, Shift* and *F* to open the *Search* window and pick a location to search, the window will look like the figure at the top of the facing page.

Not all the new 'advanced' features are useful. Some, like the *additional criteria* and the options to search *comments* and *attachments*, are irrelevant to almost all the PDFs you will come across. Likewise, searching the *bookmarks* is usually unnecessary, since these usually duplicate major headings in the text.

The drop-down list under *Return results containing* is most certainly useful and allows you to pick from:

- Match Exact word or phrase
- Match Any of the words
- Match All of the words
- Boolean query



If you chose *Match All of the words*, then the *Proximity* option becomes available. This requires all the words to be found within a certain range. The range is specified in the *Search Preferences* (see top of facing page)—the default range of 900 is definitely too high, but it's difficult to say what's the best value and you made need to adjust it for specific searches.

If *Whole words only* is unchecked, the *Stemming* option becomes available. It allows you to search for words starting with the same characters—so 'wither' would find 'witheridge', 'witherage' or 'witherid', but also 'withered' or 'witherspoon'! I suspect that a *Boolean* search would be more useful (see below).

So, what use is all this in narrowing down my search for the infamous John?

### Using a Boolean query

I can try a *Boolean* search. This allows me to use AND and OR in my search phrase.

I am going to try *John Witheridge AND (Mary Atkins OR Jane Emmet)*. This will produce a list of all documents in which 'John Witheridge' and either 'Mary Atkins' or 'Jane Emmet' occur (John was married to *Mary Atkins* before he married *Jane Emmet*).

*Note:* The parentheses are important. If I search on *John Witheridge AND Mary Atkins OR Jane Emmet*, the I will get a combined list of:

- all documents in which both 'John Witheridge' and 'Mary Atkins' occur
- all documents in which 'Jane Emmet' occurs

which is not the same result. Remember, *AND* takes precedence over *OR* (i.e., is evaluated first), unless parentheses are used to override this default precedence.

My *Boolean* search gave me a list of only 130 hits in 8 documents. That's a big improvement.

### Searching for partial words

We're not out of the woods yet—I know that *Emmet* is also spelled *Emmett* in some places!

I could redo my search by looking for *John Witheridge AND (Mary Atkins OR Jane Emmet OR Jane Emmett)*, but a better option is to turn off the *Whole words only* setting (in fact, I recommend you keep it turned off unless you have a specific need for it).

Repeating the search with that setting turned off, I get 162 hits in 10 documents. I could also have changed *Atkins* to *Atkin*, in case that also had different spellings.

OK. So I've cheated again! Since the phrase *John Witheridge* occurs in almost every document, I could have just searched for *Mary Atkin OR Jane Emmet* and got the same result, but then I couldn't have included the bit about the parentheses, could I?

### Using proximity

It's always possible that a reference to great-great-great-grandfather John occurs without any mention of either Mary Atkins or Jane Emmet. I know that John claimed he was born in Bideford, so I can try a Boolean search for *John Witheridge AND Bideford*.

Unfortunately, it turns out that 'Bideford' is almost as common as 'John Witheridge'. I end up with 596 hits in 40 documents.

However, what I am really looking for is 'Bideford' mentioned in connection with our 'John'. I can retry the search using the *Proximity* setting. If you remember, I recommended that the range for this be reduced from the default value of 900 to 50.

So, can I redo my search and look for *John Witheridge* and *Bideford* within a range of 50 words? Not exactly—the *Proximity* setting only works with a *Match All of the words* search, so what I can look for is the words *John*, *Witheridge* and *Bideford* all occurring within a range of fifty words. However, this would find any occurrence of *John* and *Witheridge*, not just the combination *John Witheridge*. It comes up with 205 hits in 21 documents.

It is a great pity that you cannot use the *Proximity* setting in combination with *Boolean* searches—perhaps a future version of *Adobe Reader* will allow this!

### Refining the search

This allows you to perform another search, but limited to the documents found by the preceding search.

I am not sure how useful this is, in practice. I tried to refine my previous *Proximity* search with a second search looking for the exact phrase *John Witheridge*, but because that phrase is so common, it was found in each of the 21 documents and the number of hits actually increased to 297.

Somehow, I doubt that I shall be using this feature too often. Ah well, back to the brute force approach!



## A few searching tips

I will end with a few 'gotchas' to look out for:

- Alternative or incorrect spellings: 'Combe Martin' versus 'Combmartin' or 'Bridgewater' versus 'Bridgwater'
- Ligatures in the later issues (Vol 19 No 2 onwards). These are the double letters 'fi' or 'fl' which are actually printed as a single character: 'fi' or 'fl' to improve the overall appearance
- Be careful about searching for dates. What you think is a '1' (one) could be an 'l' (el)
- Watch out for words that are hyphenated across the end of a line. They won't be found. Similar problems can occur if the target phrase spans the boundary between two paragraphs.

### On the Side

*Sometimes,  
at my age, I have  
difficulty getting in  
or out of the bath!*



# Witheridge Family Recipes

We have two recipes in this issue, both from North American members.

## ***Puffed Cauliflower Cheese***

Kathy served this with ham and green beans, when we visited her and Paul in Sarnia.

### **Ingredients (for 4 servings):**

- |                                     |                               |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1) 1 medium cauliflower             | 4) 3 eggs (separated)         |
| 2) 56g (¼ cup) butter or margarine  | 5) 226g (1 cup) grated cheese |
| 3) 30ml (2 tablespoons) plain flour | 6) 355ml (1½) cups milk       |
|                                     | &) Salt & Pepper to taste     |

### **Method:**

Wash cauliflower, remove stalk, cut into florets and cook in boiling salted water until tender. Drain.

Heat butter, add flour and stir over low heat for 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Add milk gradually stir until smooth. Return to heat and stir to boiling.

Add salt and pepper. Stir in egg yolks, cheese and cauliflower. Beat egg whites until stiff and fold into mixture. Pour into greased dish and sprinkle with extra cheese.

Bake in pre-heated oven at 200°C (400°F or Gas mark 6) for about 30 minutes until well risen and brown.



*Mmmm. I also like it with baked beans... Ed.*

## Spicy Chesapeake Chicken Spread

At the end of a wonderful trip around Canada and the US, before returning home to the UK, Paul and I stayed overnight with Anne and Jim Atwell.

What hospitality! The food was to die for, and the company was fantastic. I hope to be able to return the hospitality if they visit the UK again.

This dish was served before dinner with a lovely glass of wine. We enjoyed it so much that, upon return to the UK, I served this to our guests when, as is our family custom, we celebrated American Thanksgiving. Needless to say it went down a treat. Thank you Anne for sharing this recipe with us.



By Anne  
Geddes-Atwell

### Ingredients:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1) 450g (16oz) softened cream cheese       | 6) 75g (1/3 cup) minced celery           |
| 2) 15ml (1 tablespoon) bottled steak sauce | 7) 56g (1 1/4 cup) chopped parsley       |
| 3) 5ml (1/2 tsp) curry powder              | 8) 56g (1/4 cup) chopped roasted almonds |
| 4) Red and black pepper to taste           | 9) Crackers or melba toast to serve      |
| 5) 340g (1 1/2 cups) minced cooked chicken |  |

*Note:* For ingredient (2), Anne recommended *AI Steak Sauce*. I couldn't find it in the UK, so I used *Lea & Perrins Worcestershire* sauce.

### Method:

Beat together, cream cheese, steak sauce, curry powder and red and black pepper. Blend in cooked chicken, celery and 2 tablespoons parsley (refrigerate the remaining parsley for decoration). Shape mixture into a 9 inch log shape. Wrap in plastic wrap and chill for 4 hours or overnight. Toss together the chopped almond and remaining parsley. Unwrap the chicken log and coat with the nut mixture. Serve chilled with crackers or melba toast.





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By Kathy Witheridge

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We currently have e-mail addresses for only about half the membership. If you are one of the other half, or even *think* you could be one of the other half, *please* help us out by sending an e-mail to [Webmaster@WitheridgeFHS.com](mailto:Webmaster@WitheridgeFHS.com), letting us know your correct e-mail address. If you want it to remain private—that is, not published in *The Witheridge Times*—just say so.

## On the side: Wrong number

A man joins a big corporate empire as a trainee.

On his very first day of work, he dials the kitchen and shouts into the phone, “Get me a coffee, quickly!”

The voice from the other side responded, “You fool you’ve dialled the wrong extension. Do you know who you are talking to, dumbo?”

“No,” replied the trainee.

“It’s the CEO of the company, you fool!”

The trainee shouts back, “And do you know who you are talking to, you fool?”

“No,” replied the CEO indignantly.

“Good!” replied the trainee, and puts the phone down.

## Post scriptum: the next issue

The next issue should be with you around the end of August.

I hope that we shall have some more meaty genealogical articles in that issue, plus the much delayed article about the GWT (or ‘Great Witheridge Tour’) of North America.

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

*Continued from inside front cover*

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