

Wates Family

In February 1997 I circulated a letter to various members of the family for whom I had addresses. The purpose of that letter was to ascertain what interest there was in forming some sort of association for members of the family to keep in touch and to continue Margaret Pitt's work in recording the family. Not everyone has responded, partly no doubt because many of the addresses were out of date, but I would like to thank all those who did respond and support the idea. There was certainly a sufficient degree of support to take the next step, which is this letter.

I have gathered about 200 addresses of members of the family spread over the world - England, Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand and India - to which this letter is being sent.

Some of you will not know of the book produced by Margaret Pitt which she called *The Wates Family Saga*. This is a 200 page book in which, in addition to recording the origins of the family to the extent that it is known, she has recorded detailed information of every member of the family of which she could find any record, either through personal contacts or from public records. She also included many brief biographical sketches and a comprehensive index. It is rare to come across a member of the family in England who is not recorded, but as her searches of public records were restricted to England the information from other countries has had to rely on personal contact and is therefore much less comprehensive. Those who have responded to my first letter have supported the idea that her work should be continued rather than left to be frozen in time. With the expansion of the family it is however too much for one person to do single handed. My idea therefore is that an informal association of members of the family should be formed who could keep in touch by means of a newsletter (specimen overleaf), with individuals volunteering to gather and supply information on their own branches of the family. This information would be used to keep the Saga updated.

There are no spare copies of the Saga available but as will be seen overleaf there is a development which should make it again available in some form soon.

I enclose a questionnaire and I would be most grateful if you would complete and return it to, even if it is only to say that you are not in the slightest bit interested.

Reference system

In the Wates Family Saga each member of the family has a unique reference comprising letters of the alphabet which show his or her lineage. For this purpose Margaret assumed that of the earliest recorded ancestors there were two brothers, George born about 1725 and John born about 1735. The reference for the descendants of George therefore commence with the letter Aa and for those of John with the letter Ab. A note on page 11 refers to a different possibility. After publication she was fortunate enough to find a copy of the will of George. From this it became clear that John was his son, and not his brother. I have assumed, although this is not definite, that he was the second son. I have therefore taken the liberty of altering the reference system to reflect this, and references overleaf use the revised lettering. I have not given George a letter at all. His first son George having died in infancy, John (b.1747, not 1735) (ancestor of the building family) is Ab, so there is no change, his third son George is Ac, formerly Aab and his fourth son James (ancestor of the Woolwich

branch) is $Ad \cong$, formerly $Aac \cong$

Brian A. Wates Feb 1998

NEWSLETTER

Wates Group

The Wates Group of building companies celebrated its centenary in 1997 with a cocktail party attended by most of the descendants of Edward Wates (baakc) who founded the firm in 1897, originally as a furniture business, and his brother Arthur (baakf) who was his partner. The company has been very successful and the family have used their wealth for good causes several receiving honours for the work they have done. Members of the fourth generation are now actively involved in the management of the Group

The present chairman Michael Edward Wates (baakcdb) was awarded the CBE in the New Years Honour List for services to the construction industry.

The Internet

Ian Roberts (d(ac)bhahaaa) of Ottawa, Canada has his own website (www.ncf.carleton.ca/~dd404) partly devoted to the family history research he has done. He refers to the Wates Family Saga, and has a link to a website upon which he has painstakingly given brief details of all members of the family who appear in the Saga and from which the family tree of any such member can be constructed by the computer !

The Saga on computer

The Saga has been scanned onto computer disk. However it did not scan very well and much work has had to be done on it. Ian Roberts has been working on it and I have incorporated the annotations that Margaret made to her own copy. There will be further news about the availability and updating of the Saga in future editions of the newsletter

Woolwich plc.

The Woolwich Building Society, formerly the Woolwich Equitable Building Society was floated on the Stock Exchange in 1997 as a bank under the name Woolwich plc. This was also the 150th anniversary of its foundation which was celebrated by a dinner held at its new head office in Bexleyheath. G.Ainsworth Wates (d(ac)blebb) and Margaret Pitt=s daughter, Naomi Toms(d(ac)blecb), were invited to attend as representative of the Wates family which had for so long been involved with the building society.

The 150th anniversary was also marked by the publication of a new history of the Society. Unfortunately Joseph Wates (d(ac)bl) is incorrectly described as the cousin of his predecessor as secretary, Benjamin Cunningham Wates (d(ac)bea), and not his uncle.

Deaths

Arthur Thomson (d(ac)bhbbe) died on 30.6.97 at the age of 92 in Hackettstown, New Jersey, U.S.A. last year having recently celebrated his 70th wedding anniversary to Alva. They were always very hospitable to members of the family and as acknowledged by Margaret Pitt in her introduction it was his brother Hugh, who died a few years ago, who was one of those who inspired her to write the Saga.

Stanley Francis Wates (d(ac)blgAh) died on 21.9.97 at the age of 70 died in Hyderabad, India. He was a Circle Inspector in the Police. He was one of eight children of Dominic Wates and is survived by his wife Dulcie Mary and eleven children living in India or Australia.