

## **Maria Mitten, née Wood (1873–1939), husband Charles Mitten (c.1870–1948) and all their children at St. Leonards, Hastings, Sussex.**

Maria Wood, was born in Lydd, Romney Marsh in 1873, her father Thomas Wood and mother Elizabeth (née Butchers). She married Charles Mitten on 15 June 1895 at Hastings. Their eight children were born in St. Leonards, Hastings, between 1896 and 1913. The earliest photograph that has survived shows Maria in 1910 (then aged 37) with only two of the children.



Maria Mitten in 1910, with baby Edith on her lap and Fred, aged three years. Kathleen was not born until three years later, the other children were old enough to have been at School. On the left is Maria's sister-in-law Fanny Mitten. This photograph was taken at Studio of H. Marchant, Bohemia Road, St Leonards

The second photo on the following page 2 nicely shows all of the family (Maria, husband Charles and the eight children), probably late in 1914.



Back Row left to right: Dorothy (1900–1986) married Charles West; Bertha (1896–1965) married Frank Catt; Elsie (1898–1968) married Herbert G. Shaw.

Front row left to right: Maria Mitten née Wood (1873–1939); held by Maria is Kathleen (1913– ) who married Roy Huggett; Fred Mitten (1907–1974) married Edith [?]; Ivy (1905–1973) married Albert Gadney; Charles Mitten (c.1870–1948); Charles Mitten Jnr (1902-1980), married Winifred Williams; and in front of her father is Edith [Edie] (born 1910 ) who married Cecil Stace.

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Vera Shaw, granddaughter of Maria and daughter of Elsie Mitten (in the above photograph back row at right) writing to R. D. Wood in July 2002 provides the following information:

"At the time the above photograph was taken, they were living at 1 Cornfield Terrace, St. Leonards-on-sea, just off Bohemia Rd, right opposite St. Peters Church. I think they had lived there for the whole of their married life, we (the Shaw's) lived at No. 6, Cornfield Terrace, and Aunt Dorothy (in the photograph at left of back row), and her family at No 17. In fact the whole family lived close by. The family had very close associations with the St. Peters Church in Cornfield

Terrace. My grandparents were Caretakers for the Church and the adjoining Hall, for a great many years, and when it became too much for them my parents took it on, my Father also became Verger, and Scoutmaster of the troop attached to the Church; all the Mitten daughters were married there, and many of the grandchildren were christened there."

"In 1935 we moved to 105 Bohemia Rd, and my grandparents then came to live with us. Grandmother Maria's mind had been failing for sometime, I realise now that she had Alzheimer's disease, although it was not called that then (we were told that she had "premature senile decay"). She died at our home on 9 September 1939 just 3 days after her 66th birthday."

The following photograph shows the Shaw family in 1943. Taken on the occasion of the silver wedding anniversary of Elsie Louise Shaw née Mitten (1898-1968) and husband Herbert George Shaw (1894-1965), with their three children: Vera Shaw (born 1919) in the front between her parents, with Doreen (known as Betty) (1920-1959) behind left who had already at that time been married to Leslie Holtam for almost a year, and John Shaw (1922-1992) in uniform.





As mentioned above, all the Mitten daughters married at St Peter's Church.

On the left here is Elsie, at age of 20, on her marriage to Herbert Shaw on 20 March 1918.

Below is the wedding of Dorothy Mitten who married Charles West on 26 December 1923. The bridesmaid on the left of this photograph is Edith Mitten, and behind her, parents Maria (by then aged 50) and Charles Mitten.

