# My Family History

## An introduction to the booklets

**Chris Green**

# Introduction

My interest in tracing my ancestors started over forty years ago. As anyone who has attempted this (recent estimates put the number of amateur 'researchers' at over 1 million and growing year by year) will have discovered, the task becomes progressively more difficult as the higher, or earlier, branches of the family tree are reached.

I should say from the outset that my 'research' has not proceeded in an entirely logical fashion. As others engaged on this task will know, it is reasonably easy to list the members of one's own generation and the next one or perhaps two above. 'Research' on this level is invariably by word of mouth and of course the older the relative from whom the information comes the further back up the tree one is able to progress. In my case I only ever knew one grandparent but I was lucky enough to be shown, and later given, a family Bible from the other side of the family.

Various books on 'Tracing your ancestors' give various suggestions. Several research methods are possible: perhaps the most popular one is simply to trace both your parents, then their parents, and so on. This gives a nice symmetrical tree and is uncluttered by cousins or great-aunts, but purely because of this it is sometimes rather unsatisfying. Another way is to concentrate on just one branch of the family, perhaps that of one's paternal line.

What I attempted to do was to combine elements of each. I was interested (as are most people who pursue this interest) in getting as far back, chronologically, as I could. I also wanted to put a little more flesh on the bare bones of the tree by including brothers and sisters – and, where possible their spouses and families. This has the advantage that when a dead end is reached with one branch of the family there will always be some other leads to be followed.

This history is incomplete, as any family history must be. I should welcome any further information, and in particular notice of any errors or omissions in the text.

## Booklets

One danger of pursuing every relative in sight is that to display them all in the correct relationship to one another would require a wall-sized chart (on a large wall). I therefore decided to persevere with the idea but to produce a short booklet for each branch of the family, and to reprint each booklet as fresh information became available. I soon found that it was necessary to produce an 'ancestors-only' chart (see page 1) in order to keep track of where everyone fitted in.

Some names are easier to research than others. GREEN, for example, is so common that without a lot of luck tracing the line back beyond a few generations would be immensely difficult. Similarly, finding the right OWENs in Wales would not be easy. For just the same reasons, DELLA ROCCA was sufficiently unusual that practically every occurrence I could discover would probably turn out to be a relation, however distant. The results so far have been mixed, and will be described further in the individual booklets.
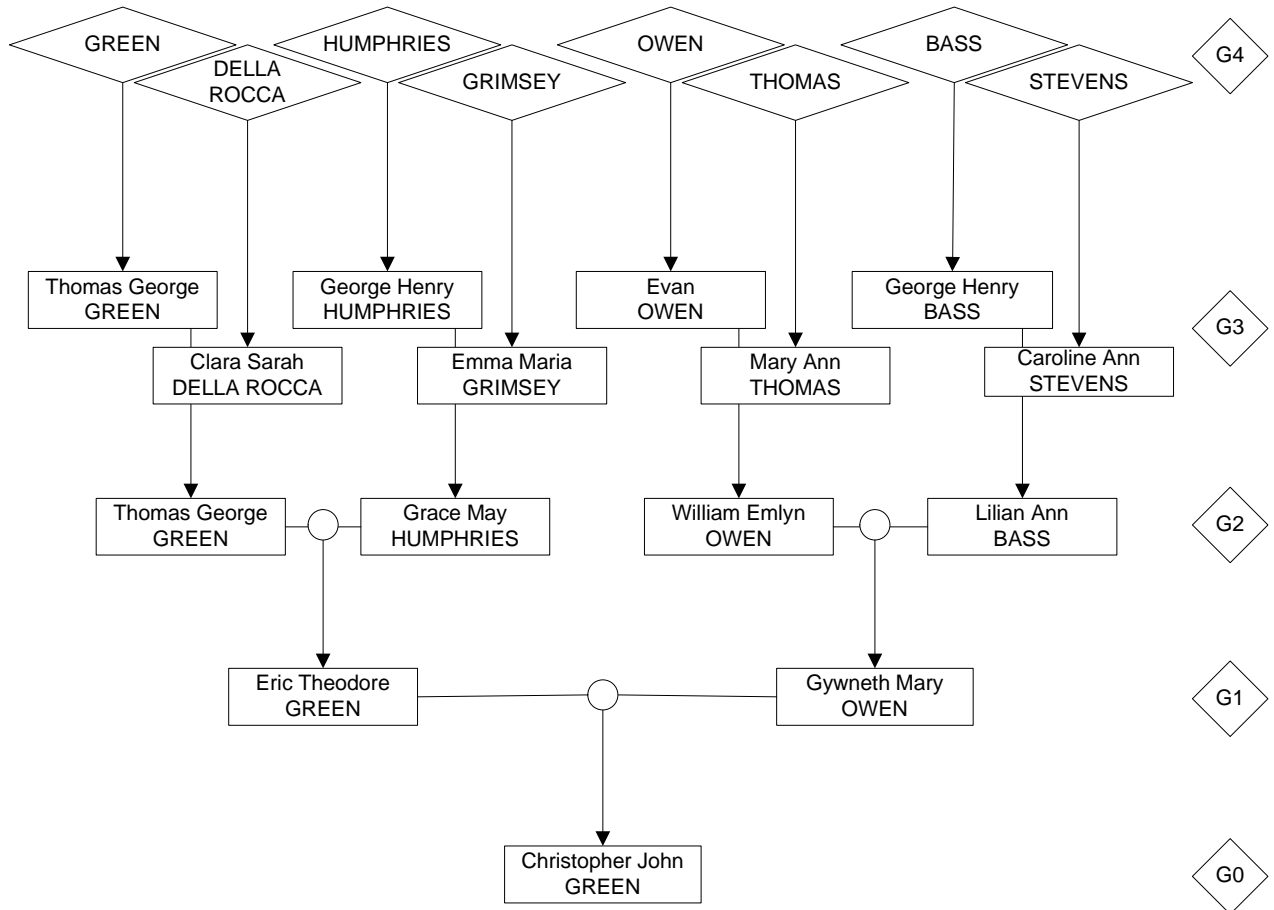
The approach I took at first was that each booklet would take one surname and follow that back as far as possible, including any brothers or sisters, in-laws, etc. as appropriate. Each

generation back would produce another surname and this would be the starting point for a different booklet.

Thus the first booklet would be for the name GREEN and start with me, tracing the line of GREENs back as far as possible through my father, his father, and so on. The next booklet would be for OWEN, starting with my mother's natal surname and following her paternal line; and so on.

Each precessive (? the opposite of successive?) generation would thus double the number of booklets required, and of course the booklets following the earliest generations would be successively shorter as less information is found. Eventually this system would become unmanageable so a compromise was established. There would be only eight booklets, one for each of my great-great-grandparents; and each booklet would include, from that point back, both sides of the families of that great-grandparent.
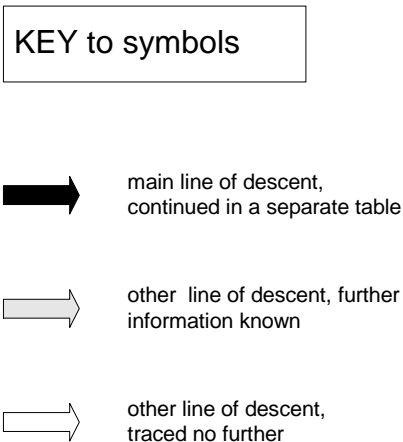


The diagram above shows the eight 'gt-gt-grandparent' families (in the diamonds) and my descent from them (G1 = Generation 1 (that of my parents), etc.).
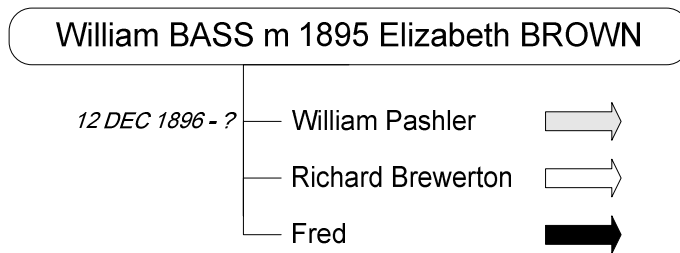
## *Booklet layout*

I have endeavoured to set out each booklet in the same fashion, working from the earliest records I have found towards the present generations. Each generation has a subsection to itself; children from this generation are described in a later subsection, and so on. It is not always possible to keep to a rigid pattern but every care has been taken to ensure that the flow of the text follows the chronological flow.

The tables all use the same key, which is shown below:

| KEY to symbols |
| --- |

main line of descent,
continued in a separate table

other line of descent, further
information known
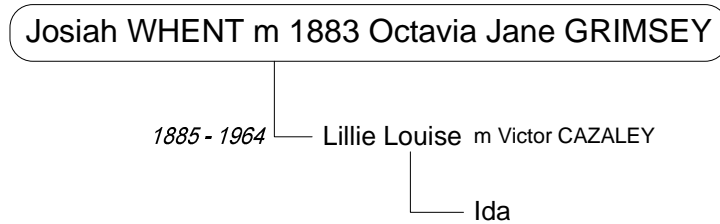
other line of descent,
traced no further

Many tables are used to show various lines of descent, and most are of the pattern shown below, describing one family unit – i.e., the parents with the children that I have found.

William BASS m 1895 Elizabeth BROWN

*12 DEC 1896 - ?* — William Pashler
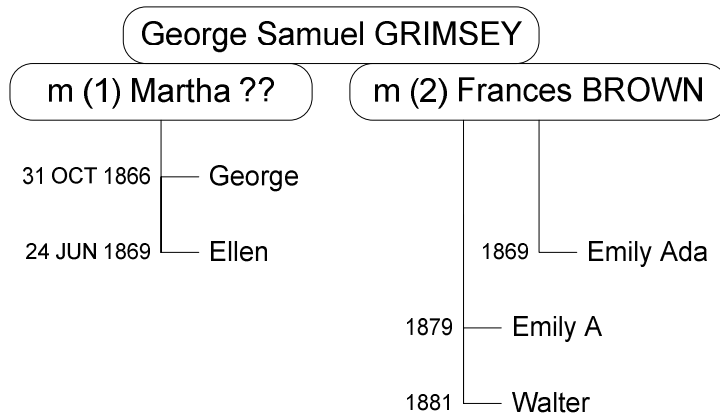
Richard Brewerton

Fred

Note that there may be other children that I have not found.

Occasionally three generations, rather than two, are shown, as in the next table; invariably this indicates that I have little information about the intervening individual(s).

Josiah WHENT m 1883 Octavia Jane GRIMSEY

*1885 - 1964* —— Lillie Louise  m Victor CAZALEY

Ida

When a multiple marriage occurs I have tried to indicate which children belong to which marriage and, wherever possible, the physical placement of the children reflects their relative position within the family:

George Samuel GRIMSEY

m (1) Martha ??          m (2) Frances BROWN

31 OCT 1866 —— George

24 JUN 1869 —— Ellen          1869 —— Emily Ada

1879 —— Emily A

1881 —— Walter

In this instance Emily Ada is a daughter of Frances Brown by her first marriage.

Other types of table may be used if the various relationships within a family or families are shown more clearly by doing so.

## Date conventions

When dates are known to be accurate (that is, they have been taken from a certificate, register or other 'official' document) they are shown in Roman text in full, in the form dd mmm yyyy – for example '06 DEC 1949'. Where dates are approximate the day of the month is omitted, thus 'DEC 1949' or even just '1949'. Note that the year is always shown as four digits to avoid confusion.

Where the dates are those of baptisms and burials (the usual dates found from parish registers), rather than births or deaths, the dates are shown in italics.[*]

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[*] It is recognised that when entering dates into a computer, text that is italicised or in parentheses will often not be recognised as such or sometimes may not even be accepted. In these cases other means of indicating the distinction should be used.

It is less confusing to use the abbreviation 'abt' for about or approximately, rather than 'c' as this last could be mistaken for 'christening'. Similarly 'bef' and 'aft' can be used for 'before' and 'after' although the symbols '<' and '>' respectively could also be used.

Date entries in trees should be consistent. For instance, when giving dates for the children of a family all should give the same information, either:

- the life span (1846 – 1925)
- the full date of birth / baptism (23 AUG 1946)
- an abbreviated date of birth / baptism (1945).

## Family relationships

Family members (by which I mean all relatives, of whatever generation, whether blood-related or marriage-related) are classified as follows:

- Primary. I have defined a primary relative as either (i) myself or (ii) the parent of a primary relative. This category also includes (as a special case) my two children

- Secondary. A secondary relative is either (i) a sibling of a primary relative or (ii) the spouse of a secondary relative

- Tertiary. A tertiary relative is the child of a secondary relative or, to be more precise, a child of a couple both of whom are secondary relatives.

Clearly this categorisation can be continued *ad infinitum*, with a quaternary relative being the spouse of a tertiary relative, etc.

In order to keep the family structure as clear as possible, families of secondary relatives (i.e. tertiary relatives and beyond) are shown in appendices to the main narrative.

For the purposes of these Family History booklets details of relatives beyond tertiary are not included in any detail, although if information concerning such relatives is available it will be included in an appendix.In some cases (generally when I have made contact with the relative concerned) their relationship to me, and any known details of their family, will be included.

## The need for labelling

In many families the same Christian name is passed down from generation to generation, and often the proliferation of the same name leads to much confusion. In an attempt to minimise this I have adopted a system of labelling which I shall try to use throughout. Note that this labelling convention can only be applied when a definite relationship has been established with a direct ancestor; but when a relationship has been established a reference can be determined, however remote the relationship might be.

1. Any **primary** ancestor will have a three-digit numerical reference. This is calculated using myself as a base with the reference 001.

- The reference number of the *father* of any primary ancestor is calculated as 2 x the reference of that individual; thus my father will be (001 x 2 =) 002, my (paternal) grandfather will be (002 x 2 =) 004, etc.
- The reference number of the *mother* of any primary ancestor is calculated as 2 x the reference of that individual plus 1; thus my mother will be (001 x 2 + 1 =) 003, my (paternal) grandmother will be (002 x 2 +1 =) 005, etc.
- Thus the wife of any primary ancestor (who is, by definition, also a primary ancestor) will have a reference one greater than that of her husband; however, I am the sole exception to this rule!

2. Any secondary ancestor will have a reference comprising three figures plus a letter. The three figures will be that of the primary ancestor to whom he or she is related (remember that a secondary ancestor is defined as a sibling of a primary ancestor). The letter will indicate his or her position in the family relative to the primary ancestor.
   - siblings older than the primary ancestor will take letters A (eldest) to M (youngest)
   - siblings younger than the primary ancestor will take letters N (eldest) to Z (youngest).
   - thus a family with three children, of which the primary ancestor (with reference 010) is the youngest, would be labelled '010L', '010M' and 010.
   - The spouse of a secondary ancestor will have the same reference, but with the letter suffix in lower case.

3. A tertiary ancestor (who is the child of a pair of secondary ancestors) takes the reference of his parent (with a capital letter suffix) and adds a second letter. This second letter determines his position within the children. Thus if two parents, who are secondary ancestors, are 012P and 012p, then the children, in order of age, will be 012PA, 012PB, etc.

Note that the system allows only for 'natural' relatives and does not accommodate remarriages or step-parents.

As the system is purely mathematical any direct relationship can be easily calculated. For example, if 'rel' is the primary ancestor's reference:
- the child[+] of any primary ancestor can be found as INT(rel/2)
- the grandchild[+] is INT(rel/4);
- the four grandparents[+] are found as: (rel x 4); (rel x 4 + 1); (rel x 4 + 2); (rel x 4 + 3).

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[+] note that the system works in this way because only direct ancestors are concerned; thus only one child in each 'family' – who is himself or herself a primary ancestor – is considered

It can be seen that all relatives depend for their reference on their connection to a primary ancestor. Some examples might make this clearer.

I have reference 001. My younger brother Anthony (a secondary ancestor) will have a reference of 001N; siblings younger than Anthony would be labelled 001O, 001P, etc. If I had an older brother he would be 001M. Thus the nearer the start of the alphabet, the older the individual. Note that the system does not distinguish between male and female siblings.

The spouse of such a sibling (i.e. my brother-in-law or sister-in-law) takes the same letter but in lowercase. Thus Anthony's wife Debbie would be 001n.

Any children of such a relationship (my nephew or niece – a tertiary ancestor) adds a further letter, which indicates their position within that family. So Katie (Anthony and Debbie's older daughter) is 001NA, their second daughter Emily is 001NB, etc. Again no distinction is made between males and females; and note that both letters are uppercase.

Since the labelling is done according to a strict system any relationship can be discovered.

It is interesting, though possibly no more than that, to note that a common confusion about in-laws is avoided with this system. Consider, for example, my father (002). His 'brother-in-law' could be either his wife's brother or his sister's husband – both would be my uncle although strictly speaking the latter would be an uncle-by-marriage. With the system under discussion this ambiguity is avoided. My father's wife (i.e. my mother) is 003 (calculate by ref+1). His wife's brother is 003N (assuming a younger brother). However, my father's sister (again, assuming her to be younger) is 002N, and her husband would be 002n.