

What is Genealogy?

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Genealogy is the study of the descendants of families and persons from an ancestor or ancestors. This study is undertaken by many people out of interest in their personal and family origins. As a hobby it can become pleasantly (No really!) addictive (read more here), at least to the person concerned that is!

The study is also undertaken professionally, not just in order to provide a commercial service that can be used by people who are seeking help in researching their origins, but also for very serious legal and financial reasons, for example, where a person has died with out leaving a will and with no known family decendants.

Because of this there are accepted standards for doing genealogy "correctly and properly" - standards that we recommend you seek to learn and emulate.

The term Family History

The term Family History used to be regarded as synonymous with Genealogy, but now it applies to biographical research into one's ancestors - the aim typically being to produce a well-documented narrative history, of interest to family members and perhaps future generations.

Thus the study of family history involves putting "flesh on the bones (skeleton)" that is produced by genealogy - and involves the study of the historical circumstances and geographical situation in which ancestors lived. (The resulting ability to associate historical events with particular generations or individuals of your family can help history come really alive for you and the rest of your family).

For example, because of my own particular family research and "digging" more into my families 'roots' finding out what they did, where they lived, I am now setting up an allied website looking at the village of Mapperley, near Ilkeston in Derbyshire. More of that another time.

Family History UK aims to provide you with information and sources of guidance on both genealogy and family history particularly in the UK. However in this brief account we will concentrate on providing some very basic advice on genealogy - we hope it will help you whether you are an inhabitant of the British Isles, wanting to start by tracing your immediate forebears, or you live overseas, and have found that some of your perhaps distant ancestors came from here, and now would like to find out more about them.

However one word of warning - these notes of guidance should not be regarded as a substitute for good old fashioned books. Especially if you are a beginner you are strongly advised to start by visiting your local library and doing some reading on genealogy. There are many useful introductory books on genealogy and family history which will provide you with more complete and coherent guidance as to how to get started than you will get here, and there are now loads of Family History magazines published every month.

Well lets start!

- Genealogy - How You Begin
 - Planning Your Research
 - Parish Registers
- family history, genealogy

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