



Genealogy – Family History

some notes from Roland Cunningham

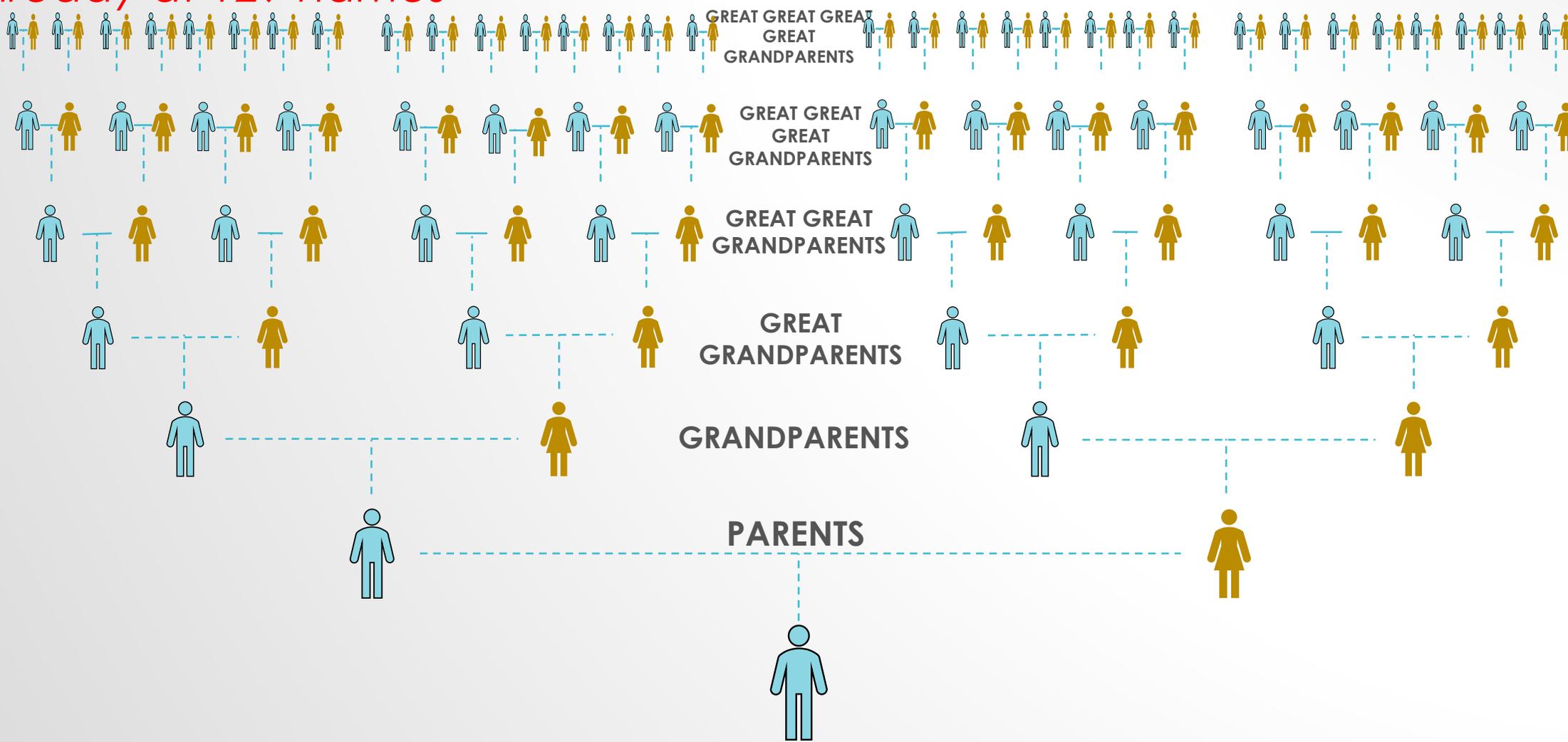
BEFORE EMBARKING - CONSIDERATIONS

- **Become a hobby detective**
- **Become the wider family archivist**
- **Do you want to connect with the distant relatives**
- **Do you want to share/collaborate information with others ?**
- **How do you want to add documentation about your relatives ?**
- **Do you know how global your family history might be ?**
- **Do you want to research just your pedigree ?**
- **Access to technology and proficiency ?**
- **How much money and time are you willing to spend ?**
- **How far do you want to go ?**

Beware this can be addictive and become a 24/7 exercise

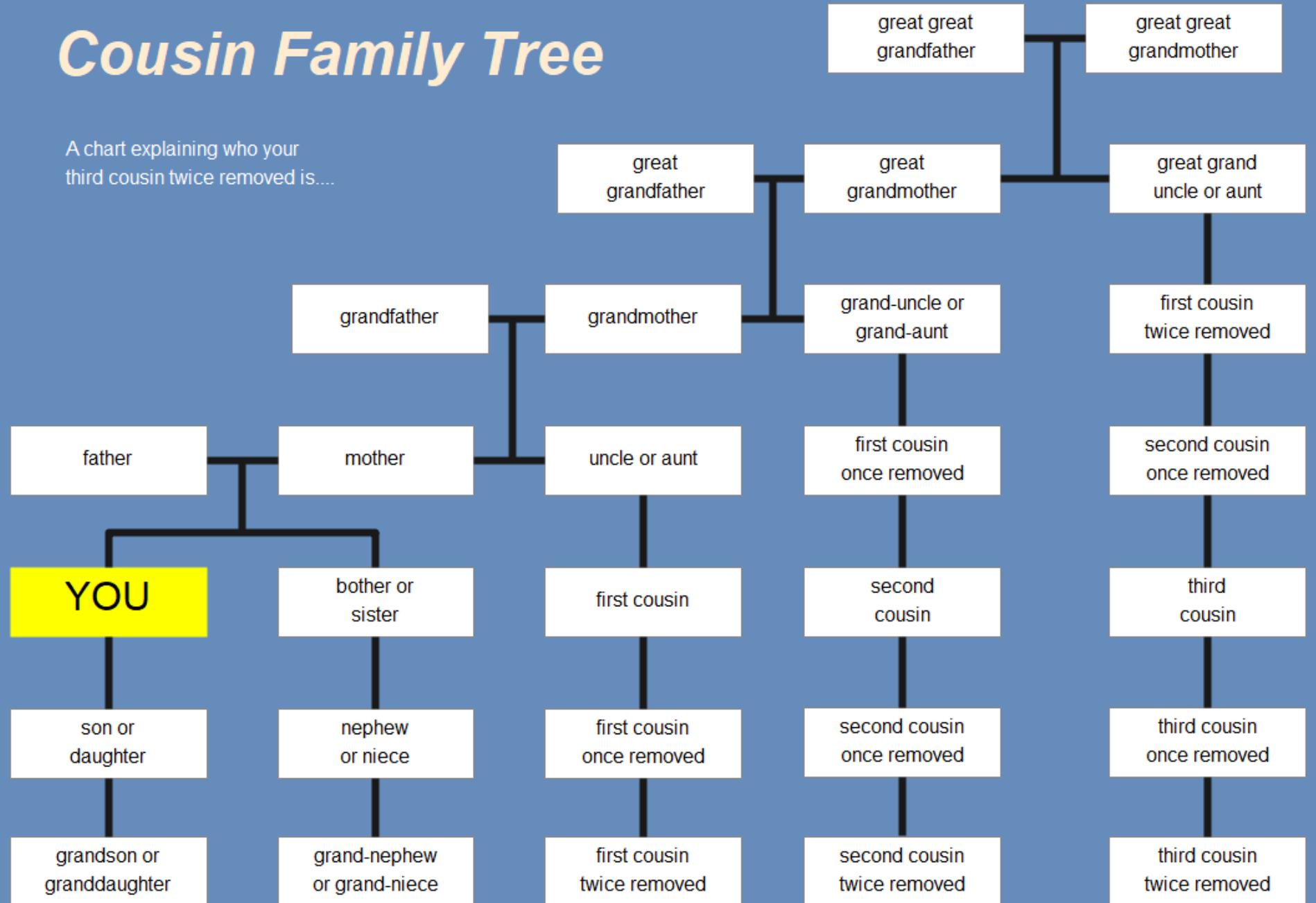
ANCESTOR TREE KEEPS GROWING

Already at 129 names



Cousin Family Tree

A chart explaining who your third cousin twice removed is....



Start adding
cousins and the
tree grows
and grows

GENEALOGY WEBSITE PACKAGES

	PROs	CONs
Ancestry £225	Best: overall genealogy site & if ancestors emigrated Largest collection historical records globally – 60 Billion Huge number of family trees – Billions of names Integrated DNA testing and cousin matching Automated Hints and user friendly	USA biased Many user trees contain errors and duplicates Doesn't have all UK records Tree lock in Privacy concerns
Findmypast £200	Best: UK & Ireland research Huge British parish records collections – names 12+ Billion Outstanding British Newspaper Archive partnership Strong military and electoral records	Limited international coverage Smaller user tree community = fewer lead connections Some original images not always available
MyHeritage £229	Best: European & if ancestors immigrated Very strong European coverage – 39 Billion Automatic 'Smart Matches' between trees DNA testing with relative matching AI tools for restoring and colouring photos	Smaller UK record collections Some records duplicated from other sites Can get False Matches Fewer trees = fewer lead connections Maybe too many features for beginners
The Genealogist £170	Best: Specialist UK records & supplement other packages Unique datasets – tithe maps and land records Strong parish and non-conformist church records Map based search tools for locations	Smaller database overall – 500 Million Mostly England and Wales Fewer community trees or DNA features Less able to filter results
FamilySearch	Best: free Shared family tree with 17 Billion searchable names Excellent research guides and learning tools	Shared tree can introduce errors and duplicates Some records restricted to libraries/research centres No built-in DNA service

GENEALOGY STANDALONE PACKAGES

	PROS	CONS
Family Tree Maker 2024 (Mac & PC) £90	Beginner friendly interface Good charting, publishing tools & mapping Multiple Undo function & colour coding Links to FamilySearch & sync with Ancestry	Closely tied to Ancestry ecosystem No incorrect info warning
Family Historian 7 (PC) £50	Very strong source-driven entry and citation tools Powerful queries and data analysis tools Excellent charting, reports and diagrams Hints/matches from FindmyPast & MyHeritage	Interface and concepts can feel complex for beginners Fewer built-in integrations with online record sites Average mapping capability
Legacy 10 (PC) free	Detailed reports and research tools Comprehensive source documentation & charting Matches from FindmyPast, MyHeritage & FamilySearch	Interface dated Average mapping and visual tools
Roots Magic 11 (Mac & PC) £50	Free 'essentials' version & Easy to learn Good citation templates and source management Sync Ancestry & FamilySearch Hints FindmyPast & MyHeritage	Interface can look dated Media handling and image editing tools are weak Charting tools weak Average mapping capability

Others

Custodian 4 (PC) £25	Primarily a database	Heredis 2026 (PC & Mac) £30	Link to FamilySearch
Reunion 14 (Mac) £84	Primarily a database	Treeview (Mac & online) £40	Link to The Genealogist

GENEALOGY STANDALONE - WORKSPACES

	NOTES
(file – INPUT)	Manual, GEDCOM, possibly other software packages (standalone or online)
(file – EXPORT)	GEDCOM – individual, families, branches (with or without media), a few can do other formats
(DISPLAY – window)	Split into panels depending on which workspace active
PEOPLE	Facts about an individual or shared with others e.g. marriage to spouse
CHARTS	Various – pedigree, descendant, family tree, relationship ...
REPORTS	Various – ahnentafel, descendant, individual, relationship, place, media, source
SOURCES	Can be as in-depth as you want to make it !!!
PLACES	Linked to mapping systems (BING, OpenStreet, Google)
MEDIA	Photos, census records, certificates, book pages, newspapers, army records
SEARCH	Web search or integrated search for records
NOTES	Actions to be taken

GENEALOGY ONLINE STANDALONE COMPARISON

Feature	Online	Desktop
Data Control	Medium	High
Collaboration	Strong	Limited
Record Access	Excellent	Limited
Advanced Reports	Basic	Advanced
Cost	Subscription	One-off
Ease of Use	Easy	Moderate
Privacy & Control	Data Public	Full Privacy