
2025: The Family Tree Chart – a Document of Remembrance

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The creation of a family tree is a chance to show case the research you've undertaken over the years in an accessible way, to share your work with your extended family.

In his talk, Tony covered:

- Software for drawing family trees
- 3 types of family tree
- What to include in your family tree
- Including photos and stories in your tree

Software mentioned:

- Family Tree Maker – can synchronise your tree with an online tree in Ancestry or FamilySearch. €.
- Family Tree Builder – My Heritage. Free up to a certain limit.
- Legacy Family Tree. Free.

Types of family tree:

- Descendant Tree: Starts with an ancestral couple at the apex and then fans out downwards through the generations beneath. Typically covers 4 or 4 generations.
- Ancestor Tree: Primary person is at the bottom. Tree expands upwards generation by generation. This is the default tree displayed in software and at Ancestry, My Heritage.
- Hourglass tree: Primary person is in the middle. Combines an ancestor tree with a descendant tree.

Conventions used:

- Males on the left in each couple
- Marriages depicted with “=”. Multiple marriages included by adding spouses to left and right.

What to include in your tree:

To make it more interesting to your audience, include more than the bare bones of dates and places. Try to include more personalised information to get to know the ancestor better. What was their occupation? What kind of house did they live in (the 1901 and 1911 census schedule B describes these). How much land did they own or lease in Griffith's Valuation? Were they into sports, the old IRA, musicians?

Bring the family tree to life:

Include photos of the people but maybe also photos or sketches of particular places of importance. Use different coloured text to denote the different generations in the tree to make it easier to read. Include quotes or poems of relevance.

Technical notes:

Tony uses Vectorworks to draw his trees – it is a CAD package. He outputs the tree in PDF format – photographic quality, printing on 190 gram paper. A0 is a standard size, but the trees may be longer – printed on a roll. File sizes are small enough to be sent via email.

