How to create a satisfactory and very personal family tree in a desk top publishing package

On the right is my own personalised family tree created in A3 in Publisher. Publisher is one of the best known desktop publishing packages but there are other packages available. They give you so much scope for adding photos, sizing boxes to put your individual family members into, moving items around, drawing lines and so much more. If you have not used one before you may find yourself on a steep learning curve but if you persevere you can create your own unique and very personal family tree.
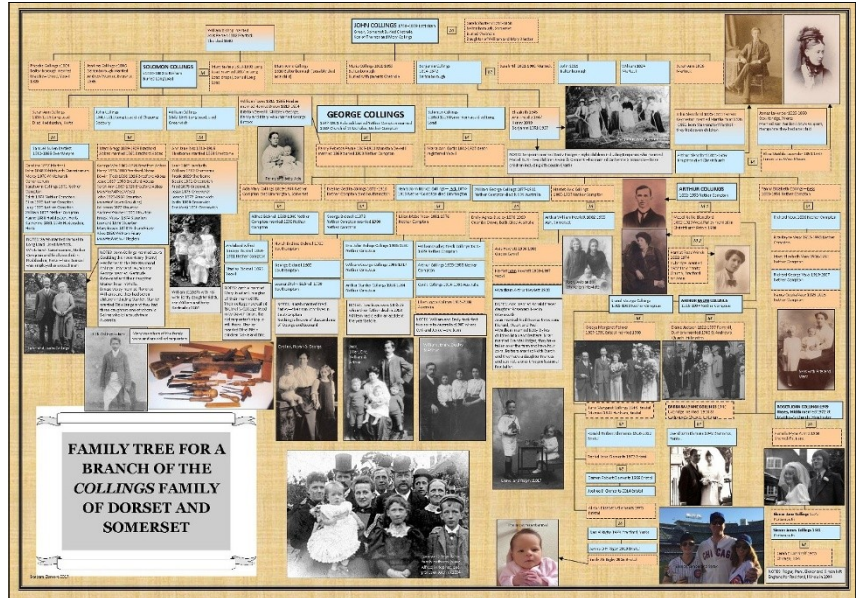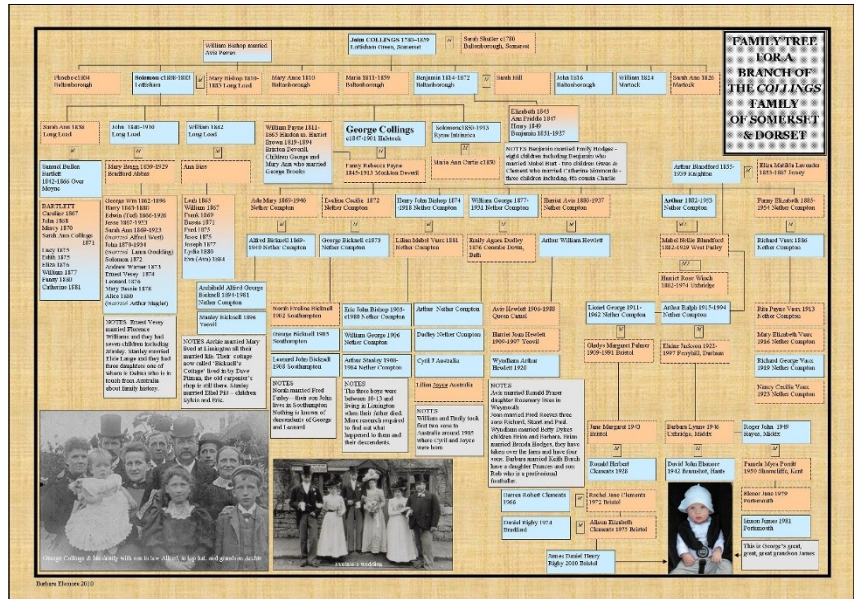
Although the tree top right is created in A3 you do not need an A3 printer to reproduce it as you can find a company which has one and request they print it for you.

The second tree is also created in A3 but by making the text much smaller you can pack much more in and here is the clever trick you can now get someone else to 'upsize' it and print it out for you in A2 giving you something that is really quite special and which you can frame up and hang on your wall if you so wish. You can get multiple copies made to share around with your family too.

The framed copy (bottom right) is printed on archival paper using archival inks from a local fine art printer at Old Barn Framing Gallery in Sherborne and this is guaranteed to last for 100 years—this is the top of the range way to go if you wish. The cost was around £30 for one copy.

The multiple copies, which can be distributed other family members, were printed by www.instantprint.co.uk/ and these are A2 posters. The quality of paper and the finish are excellent and by sending my work as a PDF in A3 they were able to 'upsize' to A2. The cost was in the region of £25 for five copies.

On the following pages I will give some hints and tips on how you too can create your own trees.
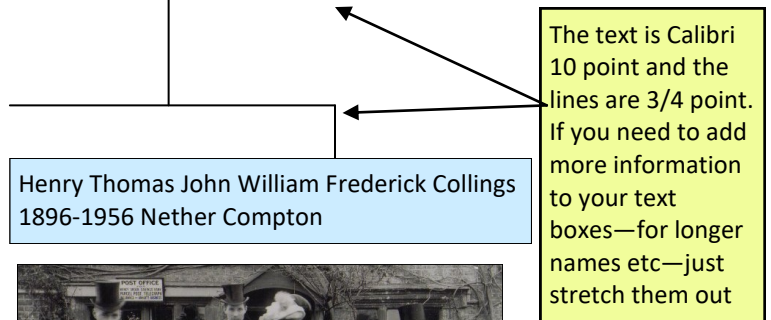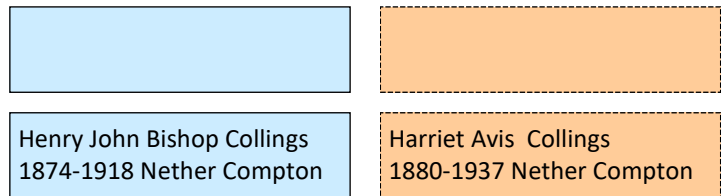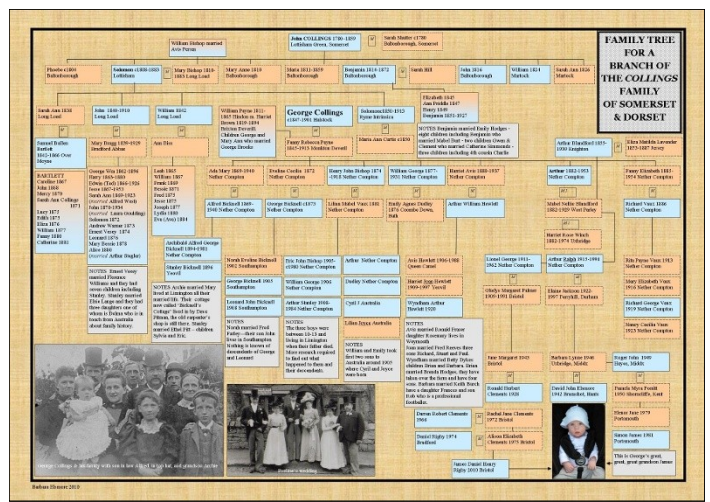
As I use and understand only Publisher the following refers to working in this package.

To Create a family tree in A3

1. Open up a document in A3 Landscape
2. Open up a text box and stretch it out to the far margins of your document. You need to go very near the edge but not so close that it is 'lost' outside the printing area—check this hasn't happened via 'print preview'.
3. Add a firm border round your text box I use 4.5 point—this gives you the area in which to create your tree

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1. Next up create blank text boxes for male and female family members. Copy and paste a number of these and keep ready on your document or in the outer area of Publisher.
2. I have chosen to put name, lifespan and where born or baptised. You can decide what you want to include right at the beginning but if you want to add additional information as you go along just stretch the boxes out to accommodate it.
3. You can make a draft if you wish on rough paper to help you position your family members or you can start at the bottom of the document with whoever you are beginning with and work back in time and up the page from there. I began at the top of the chart with a set of great, great grandparents (born c1870) on my paternal side and worked down to the most recent arrival born in 2016 at the bottom. The great thing about working with these little boxes is you can link up multiple boxes and move them around en masse so if you need all those you have already put in to move over in order to accommodate additional family members you can.
4. Next you can add lines—this is a bit fiddly but it can be done—bring the document size up to 150% to make it easier.
5. Add photos, crop them and enhance them if need be—add a 1/4 point border round photos to 'finish' them if you wish.
6. Add Notes to explain anything you want to enlarge upon.
7. You will have your own ideas too so just try them out.
8. Get used to using the 'Arrange' tools for aligning and distributing your little boxes—this will keep your relatives in the same generation in line. You can also equally distribute them and as you get more proficient you will want to do this.
9. If you want to add a background to the whole document you can as it may look more interesting than just plain white.

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1. At this stage you are ready to convert the document to a PDF so that you can send it somewhere, if you wish to print it, as not everyone can receive a document in Publisher.
2. First of all you will need to compress the pictures or it will be too big to email—just follow the automatic compress pictures icon.
3. When you are ready 'Save as' a PDF.
4. You can transfer to a memory stick and find someone with an A3 printer. If you can get to the Family History Centre it can be printed for a modest charge—please check first by email or telephone that someone will be there to help you.

Henry John Bishop Collings
1874-1918 Nether Compton

Harriet Avis Collings
1880-1937 Nether Compton

Henry Thomas John William Frederick Collings
1896-1956 Nether Compton

The text is Calibri 10 point and the lines are 3/4 point. If you need to add more information to your text boxes—for longer names etc—just stretch them out

NOTES
Norah married Fred Farley—their son John lives in Southampton Nothing is known of descendents of George and Leonard

Add notes by way of explanation

George Wm 1862-1896
Harry 1863-1880
Edwin (Ted) 1866-1926
Jesse 1867-1953
Sarah Ann 1869-1923
(*married* Alfred West)
John 1870-1934
(*married* Laura Goulding)
Solomon 1872
Andrew Warner 1873
Ernest Vesey 1874
Leonard 1876
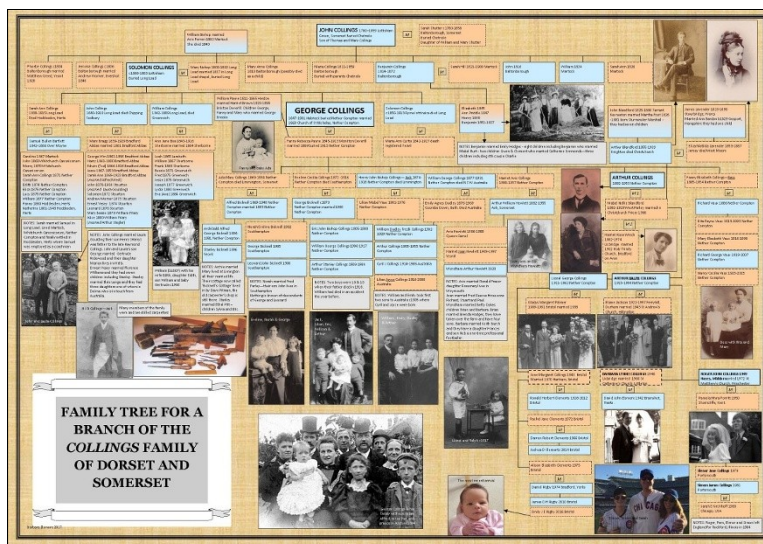Mary Bessie 1878
Alice 1880
(*married* Arthur Stegler)

If you do not have room to add all the children under some of your relatives just add them in list form.

To Create a family tree in A3 for Printing as A2

Follow instructions on previous page but this time your boxes and your text size will be smaller so that when it is 'upsized' the text will be 'right'. I have used Calibri 6 throughout and it seems to work

One thing you will need to do in order to see what you are doing, while working with such small text, is work with your document at 200% - you will then be viewing on the computer screen the size of the text that you will end up with.

When you are ready convert your document to a PDF and then send it to a printing company and request that they upsize it for you to A2—the poster section at the company I used has come up with a very satisfactory result using their 'standard' paper and finish. I will make sure one is on display somewhere at the family history centre so you can check the results for yourself if you wish.

Henry John Bishop Collings— Jack 1874-1918
Nether Compton died Limmington

On the left is the text box and I have used Calibri 6

A more conventional tree

If you wish to produce a more conventional tree you can use a plain outlined box for your family members. It may be a good way to start if you are a complete beginner as you will have the opportunity to learn how to place boxes where you want them and line them up etc and then later you can add colour and anything else you may wish to incorporate.

All the methods used here could well be just a starting point in developing your very own 'style' for creating family trees. If we are to interest younger family members in family history, having a family tree in a format which may encourage that interest could well be advantageous.

HAVE FUN!

It is important that you should enjoy creating your unique family tree and I know, from experience, that you will find your results immensely satisfying.

And please do contact me if I can be of help via the Family History Centre at sdfhs@btconnect.com
Please mark your email for my attention

Barbara Elsmore May 2017