

Chapter 1

Introduction

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In 1980, I started researching my family tree. In a short space of time, this led me to joining the Guild of One-Name Studies, a worldwide organisation that, as the name suggests, caters for people that are interested in one name in particular. I was going to research and publish anything that could find concerning the Jephcott surname. The realisation that there were many different but definitely related spellings, came as a later addition.

By 2020, the first Covid pandemic year, and after some 40 years of researching this Jephcott, Jeffcoat, etc. family, the constraints of the lockdown was seized, by me, to finally publish my work in a form that could be accessed by anybody in the world, and as a legacy database that would be accessible forever (or as long as the Guild of One-Name Studies lasted).

The Jephcott Family book was published in several editions in paper book format, but the final version of the book is an e-document, held on the internet, and on various backup hard drives. That work is occasionally updated, when new information comes to hand, but (as of 2022), it is a fairly dormant archive.

Later in 2020, with the Jephcott research meeting a convenient conclusion, and with the Covid-19 pandemic still raging, I did some delving into DNA studies for my wife's family. She knew, from the various GRO certificates that we had applied for, that her father was born illegitimately and that he never talked to her about it. It was clearly a taboo subject. He was born in 1899 and my wife was born in 1953. There were gaps in his life that, as any family historian will be familiar with, we wanted to explore and, hopefully, fill. So, when she got her results, we made an immediate and amazing connection with a family of the surname Fulcher. It was so close, that this must, surely, be a clue to who her grandfather might have been. We sent an email (no more handwritten letters!) to our match and, very quickly, received a reply, putting forward a suggestion of one man, in particular. Game on!

By way of confirmation, we decided to get her two siblings to take autosomal DNA tests as well, with different testing companies. The results were equally conclusive that this previously unknown family were close relatives. So, to be doubly sure, and one of my wife's siblings being male, we asked our new male relative in Dublin and our male sibling, to take Y chromosome DNA tests. The results were conclusive and we were then able to conclusively identify who grandfather was. The story then developed as we delved further with research, and it proved to be a very interesting ride.

In 2021, having amassed quite a bit of information about the many Fulcher family lines, we decided to found a one-name society, which we named 'The Fulcher Society', and to register it as a beginner's study with them. Having already been through this exercise with 'The Jephcott Society', some decades before, this was to be an interesting journey that would very much be led by modern research methods.

This e-book is a steadily evolving work, made easier by publishing the information that we find, as we go along.. Far better that way than to amass a huge collection of information and never publish it. Only then for whoever is tasked with dealing with deceased person's papers, to consign the lot the rubbish bin. This way, it will be preserved on the internet, at least, and may survive on remote hard drive or backup discs. We take the view that this work is accessible all, to use as they wish, to pass off as their own (if they like). We don't care. It's just a hobby and a passion for me, a desire to research, record and preserve the family information that we find.

This book follows the general template used for the Jephcott book, although it misses out the hundreds of hours of transcribing and recording done in record offices across the UK, now rendered unnecessary by the digitisation and availability of the records on the internet.

At this time (since 2020), we are researching, close to 100% of our work, using the company known as Ancestry. Gradually, we hope to expand the work through making direct family contact, where the best family history stories and photographs, are to be found. That can only come by making contacts and with co-operation. Time will tell whether that will happen and whether other researchers will join-in with this Fulcher family project.