

A family archives publication

My Life history

Frank Alan Botterill

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My life

I was born in Guildford hospital in 1941. My parents had been evacuated to my mother's aunt Gert. in Reigate. It was wartime although my memories of that time are non-existent. I have records from my sister Audrey and brother Norman of these missing years (Audrey was born in 1929 and Norman was born in 1932).

My early memories were after moving to Bexleyheath (to the house that my parents started to buy before the war). This was where I lived until after I was married in 1965.

Audrey and Norman also lived there until their marriages in 1957 and 1956 respectively. I shared a bedroom with Norman until he left home. My mother died in 1961 so that left just my father and me. After my marriage we continued to live with my father and subsequently with my stepmother Ruby as well after their marriage in March 1966. In September 1966 Evelyn and I moved to Bedford and subsequently Plumpton Green in December 1967.

Our first house was 41 East View Fields and we moved to Lamorna Station Road in January 1976. All of our children were born while we lived at 41 East View Fields but we decided to move to give more space for the family. In time Martin, Mike and Sarah all left home and have families of their own.

My transport

Early memories were of my mobility on wheels. I was given a scooter probably as a Christmas present and found it before the day (I was found out as I tried it on the upstairs landing which left wheel marks on the lino).

Later I was given a bicycle which I was able to take to infant's school (I broke up with my first girlfriend as I preferred to play football instead of giving her a ride home on my bicycle).

On a subsequent new Raleigh bicycle with drop handlebars, I was able to ride to the Grammar school in Dartford (about 4.5 miles). On one occasion I sustained a puncture and was able to push it to my brother Norman who then lived in Crayford who kindly repaired the puncture (he was not at work as he was at home recovering from a hernia repair operation).

Bicycles then gave way to motor cycles, the first a 125cc two-stroke Royal Enfield purchased for £34 from our Prudential Insurance Company Agent (1958 age 17). The second was a 350cc Matchless which my father had purchased as a combination to replace his own AJ's combination, but changing his mind, the sidecar was removed and I took the motorcycle as a solo machine.

In August 1962, I bought my first motor car, an Austin Healey Sprite, cherry red two-seater. We used this car for 70,000 miles until June 1969 (after marriage and the birth of our first child Martin who had to fit in a carry cot behind the two seats). This car was followed by a succession of 15 more cars.

Home life

Mine was a happy childhood. My memory of my only surviving grandmother (Botterill) is sketchy (she died January 1949). We were a family with close connections. Our aunt Cissy and cousin Farida were frequent visitors for Sunday tea. We often visited our aunt Gert. and at Christmas travelled to collect a chicken she had prepared for our festivities.

I tended to enjoy an only child existence which suited me but also had the benefit of an older sister and brother as role models. They were patient to my demands to play draughts with them (my father would offer to play me with one hand behind his back).

There was artistic talent in the family. I remember as a young boy, watching Norman with pen and ink producing etchings and insisted that he finished a certain part before I was consigned to bed.

Both treated me with kindness. Individually I was invited to join them on holiday. Audrey took me to Southborne, Dorset (circa.1953) with her on a coach. Norman and Maureen took me to the West Country (circa.1959) by car and to Riccione, Italy (circa.1961) by air.

While growing up I was introduced to the hobby of black and white photography. An added interest was that of home processing and printing with a home-made enlarger. Even at this stage I was fascinated by the creation of fake images.

When my mother died in 1961 I was 19 years old. Home life was one of companionship with my father. We would go out together on my motor cycle and latterly in my car. This brought him into contact with the widowed mother, Ruby, of my friend, Gerry, in their home in Spray Street Woolwich. (I met Gerry at Woolwich Polytechnic when we were both studying for an ONC qualification). What followed was, as they say, history. Dad and Ruby married in 1966 and celebrated 25 years of marriage in 1991.

I celebrated my 21st birthday at home in 1962. The dining room carpet was rolled back for a dance floor. There was a degree of drunkenness. Norman and Maureen came to assist in the preparations and I collected and took Farida home before a late hour. Dad visited Ruby for the evening and returned to join the celebrations.

I had lost contact with most of my school friends after leaving grammar school except for Ralph who had a motor cycle and subsequently an Austin Healey Sprite. However, I adopted the friends of my stepbrother Gerry such that we shared a holiday to Palafrugell, Spain by car (circa 1963). There were several cars and I shared Roger's Ford Anglia taking turns to drive. We slept in the car on-route.

Often I shared visits to dance halls with Gerry but on August 10 1963 I travelled alone and met Evelyn at Beckenham ballroom. During our early courtship we swam at the baths in Woolwich on Saturday mornings. We were joined by various friends. Dick from Swanley (with whom I worked) brought Evelyn to Woolwich, my father, Gerry and June (who I met studying English at a night school in Plumstead) were some of the swimmers.

Evelyn and I shared a holiday to Lido di Jesolo, Italy by coach (1964). This was quite daunting even then with drivers taking turns without stopping and occasionally getting lost. The crossing of the English Channel was by air from Manston, Kent, in a Dakota aeroplane. On route we passed through a valley devastated by the overtopping of the Vajont dam. Dad and Ruby also took a holiday to Lido di Jesolo, (circa 1964).

Home in Bexleyheath continued after our marriage in June 1965. The family became three. Dad was working as a messenger in the Privy Council and after Evelyn became a secretary in Downing Street we three travelled to London together. We used the car

to Blackheath station where we parked and continued to Victoria by train. After Dad's marriage to Ruby in March 1966 the family became four. In September 1966 Evelyn and I moved to Bedford. I had changed my employer in April 1966 and was offered a post as resident Civil Engineer at CEBG Grendon substation. We took up occupancy of a rented flat in the town. Dad and Ruby lived on in Bexleyheath.

Hobbies

Sport has been a source of enjoyment over the years. As a school boy, football was my passion. At primary school I represented the school in tournaments. At Dartford grammar school, Rugby was the winter sport. I only played as part of the curriculum and joined the Phoenix Sports Club (which Norman had also been a member) to play football at weekends. At the age of 25, I gave up playing as injuries tended to last from one week to the next. Racquet sports were another pleasure – tennis, badminton and squash being played until pain from my knees killed the pleasure.

DIY must be mentioned as a regular pursuit. Whether by desire or necessity, I have tackled various challenges in house and motor car maintenance and repair.

Photography has been prominent in the documentation of my life. A camera has accompanied me on most domestic and business events and the evidence can assist in recalling them. On moving into the digital age, documentation of still images became more sophisticated. At this stage the process of picture composition became an art form. Amateur faking of images moved to a higher level.

Computing. I was fortunate to have been introduced to PCs in my workplace and shared the experience with colleagues. I purchased a home PC when Clive Sinclair produced the ZX80. In 1981 I took one to Jakarta, Indonesia, on a business trip and sold it to a member of the client's staff. Computers and ancillary electronic equipment have been in my possession ever since. Self-taught in all respects, I host a web site for the Sussex Woodcraft Society.

Business life

This will be new to most people reading it. I joined T F Burns and Partners on leaving school. In 1966 I joined PCR (Preece Cardew and Rider). The structure of the Company changed over the years from PCR to Ewbank Preece and finally Mott Macdonald. Fortunately I was not affected by the changes in management and survived any redundancy threats. I travelled with the Company as an employee

mainly on bachelor status (except for trips to Sri Lanka, Bermuda and Tortola in more recent times when Evelyn accompanied me and we funded any travel costs for Evelyn).

UK site visits

Apart from my 12 months residency on site as Civil Engineer in Northampton, visits to construction sites in UK were made daily or occasionally for a full week. Regular visits were made to Aldermaston (United Kingdom Atomic Weapons Establishment) and Slough (Slough Trading Estate) and Shoreham (Gas fired power station). Less often locations were Birmingham, Exeter, Dublin, Limerick, Llanberis, and Corby.

Overseas visits

1970 - Stade West Germany - the project was for a power plant for Dow Chemical. Frequent visits to the design Office in Rotterdam Holland involved daily commutes with only an occasional stop over. Other destinations were Hamburg Turin and Milan when I contracted Hepatitis.

1977 – Kuching Sarawak, Borneo - the project was for a diesel power station with river water cooling. This entailed a single visit.

1978 – Aden, South Yemen - the project was for diesel power stations. The visit was just one week coinciding with a coup to overthrow the government. Fortunately it was short lived.

1981 and 1983 – Jakarta. Indonesia. Several visits were undertaken staying in both hotels and ex-patriot accommodation. We had a local office which organised membership for me of the British Embassy and ISCI sports club. Hash runs were also “enjoyed”, organised by the ex-patriot community. Communication with home for these periods of 5 to 8 weeks was tedious by post - telephone contact was expensive.

1982 - Abu Dhabi. My involvement was for one month deputising for the resident Civil Engineer. This was an enjoyable visit having been provided with a car, driving licence and accommodation flat on the day of arrival.

1982 – Sirte, Libya desalination plant. This was a short visit following meetings in Rome. The political environment was unpleasant. Airline staff had newspapers confiscated and hotel rooms had only Arabic numbering. My travelling colleague had photographed a sensitive site and we were stopped while he explained the purpose of our visit.

1992 – Athens, Greece. My involvement was to monitor ground investigations by a Greek Contractor. This was my most stressful overseas trip. I had no knowledge of the project, no transport and no accommodation booked. The Greek language did not lend itself to being understood and even road/place names were unmemorable. On the plus side, people were friendly and provided me

with the missing transport. I was fortunate to book into a holiday complex for breakfast and evening meal with chalet accommodation albeit no lunch.

1994 to 1997 – Shoiba, Saudi Arabia. I accepted this short stay appointment in favour of a lengthy stay in Indonesia. In fact I travelled to this location some seven times over this period staying longer than a month on only one occasion. The site was a large desalination plant on the Red Sea serving Mecca? The accommodation was a complex of purpose built two storey flats with self-catering facilities. There was a resident civil Engineer for most of the time but on the occasion of his return to UK one Christmas for eye surgery I deputised. On this visit I was involved in a road accident which caused damage to the other vehicle (a taxi ran into the back of the hired car I was driving). As a foreign national I was fortunate to avoid police involvement and agreed to pay money to the taxi Company (later refunded to me by my own Company). The incident was compounded when, having visited a chemist for a colleague, I left my spectacles on the counter before going to the supermarket for provisions. The chemist then closed for prayers and I had to wait some time for it to re-open. News had reached Brighton office of my delayed return to site but I never found out how that message got through.

1996 and 1998 – Colombo, Sri Lanka. Evelyn accompanied me on both these visits as I deputised for the resident civil Engineer. We were housed in a self-catering house built in a rural location. A car and driver was provided during the day but we had use of the car when off duty. Occasionally we stayed overnight in hotels and were treated to trips up country. Martin and Mike joined us on one of these trips. The Sri Lankans were friendly and hospitable.

Holidays

As a family we enjoyed various holiday locations. In 1971 we rented a house on Hayling Island which we shared with Dad and Ruby.(1971)

The next year (1972) we stayed in Wales at the home of Evelyn's brother Glynn and Myra.

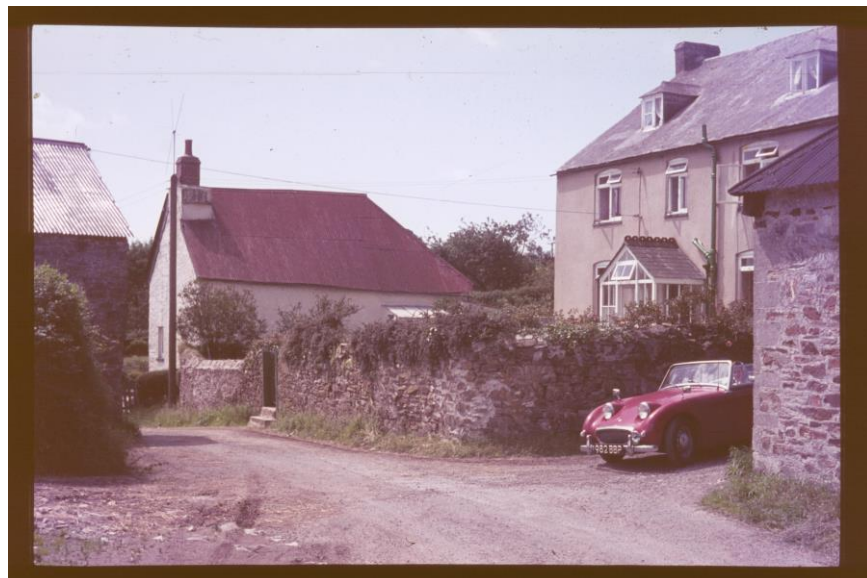
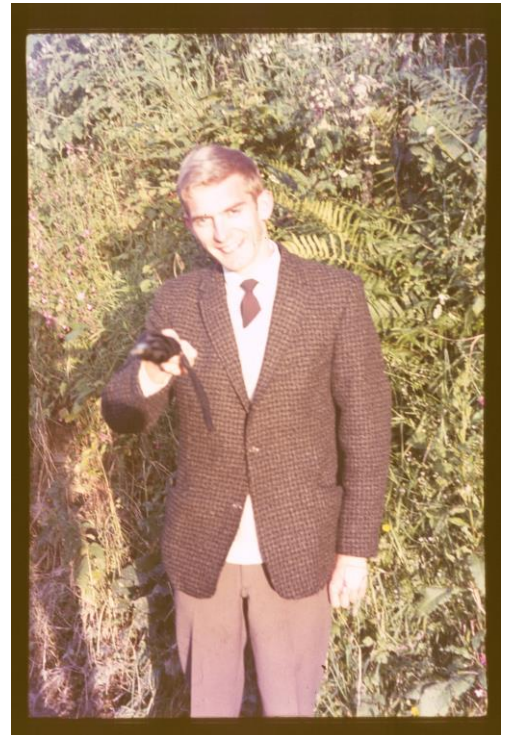
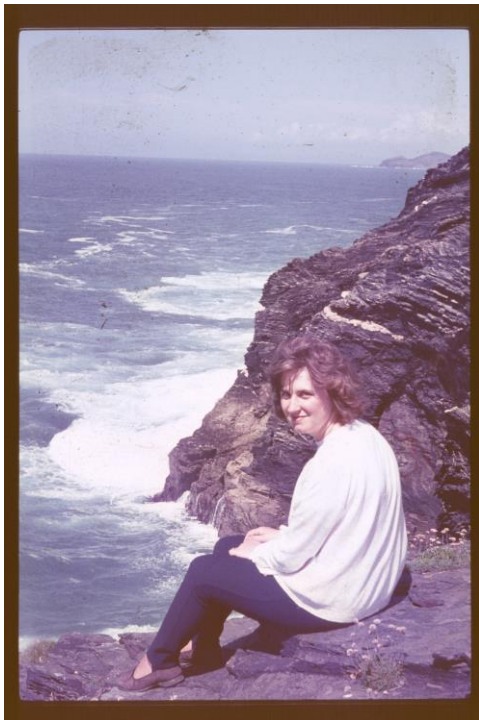


My photographs are records of a variety of holidays over the years. Starting with black and white prints, these were followed by colour transparencies, colour prints and finally folders of digital images.

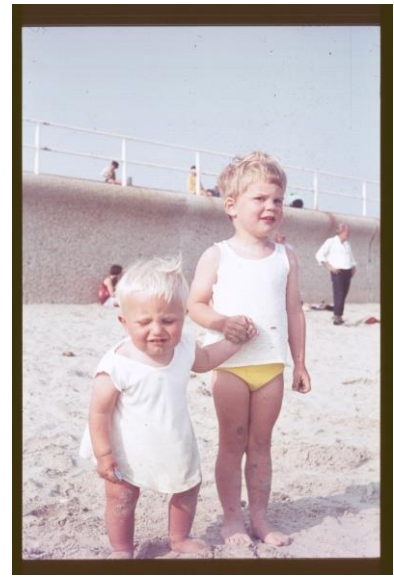
UK Holidays

1965 – Devon (Honeymoon)

We spent our honeymoon in a Devon farmhouse for the first week. After that we spent a night in Malvern close to where Audrey and Alan were living



1971 – Hayling Island



1972 – Wales



1987 – Wales



2008 – Yorkshire
2010 – Isle of Man
2012 – Woodbridge

Overseas travel (business and domestic)

1964 – Lido de Jesola



1966 – Morocco mid-May

We joined with Dad and Ruby for a holiday in Tangier Morocco with the prior intention to visit Gibraltar



Tourist photo Opportunity

Tangier rooftop Lounge area

Gibraltar

1970 – Germany/Holland/Italy (Business – no photos)

1976 – Sardinia

In 1976 we moved house and with an increased mortgage, funded a two week foreign holiday to Sardinia



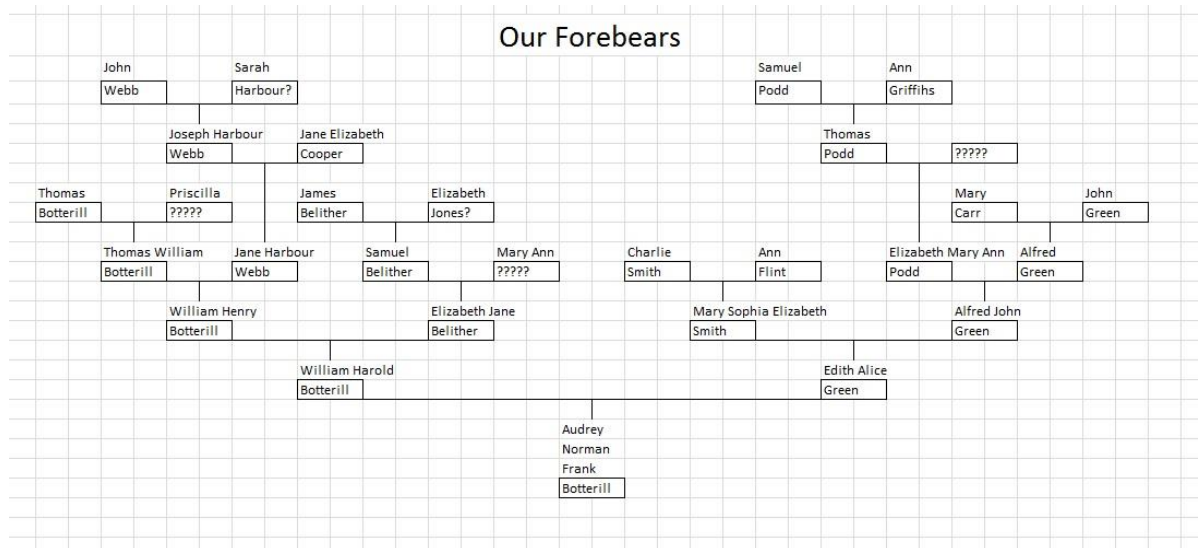
1977 – Sarawak Feb/April
 1978 – Aden - Yemen 29 June
 1981 – Dublin 21 Jan. - 22 Jan.
 1981 – Indonesia 9 July – 12 Aug., 23 Oct – 19 Dec
 1982 – Abu Dhabi Sept.??? – Libya
 1983 – Belgium 10 Aug.-23 Aug.
 1983 – Indonesia 15 Feb.- 13 March, 26 April – 29 May, 18 July – 7Aug., 26 Oct./ Nov.
 1985 – Belgium 6 Aug, - 17 Aug, with Dad & Ruby,
 1989 - Belgium 24 July – 2 Aug.
 1989 - Canada 26 April
 1991 – Canada Aug.
 1992 – Greece 28 June, Madeira
 1993 – Austria 24 Oct.- 31 Oct.
 1993 – Madeira 5 July – 13 July
 1994 - Saudi Arabia 8 April – 18 April, Belgium 1 Aug. – 12 Aug., - Saudi Arabia 14 Oct. - 20 Oct., 28 Nov. – 11 Dec., 23 Dec. – Jan 24 1995.
 1995 - Saudi Arabia 17 – 23 March, 28 April – 12 May, Madeira 3 – 17 July, Porto Santo
 1996 – Sri Lanka 6 July – 13 Aug.
 1996 – China 28 Aug. – 7 Sept.,
 1997 - Saudi Arabia 28 Sept. – 14 Oct., Madeira
 1998 - Sri Lanka Sept.
 1999 – Bermuda March, Ireland, Wales
 2000 – Austria/Budapest 28 Nov. – 5 Dec., Tortola BVI 9 – 18 Sept, Madeira 3 – 17 July
 2001 – Cyprus 3 – 17 Oct. Canada 29 May – 5 June (Evelyn and GG) Isle of Man 9 Mar.
 2002 – Spain 20 Oct. – 23 Oct (Barcelona), Wales
 2003 – France 15 – 19 Sept., Portugal 14 – 23 Oct. (Martin family and Sarah/Andy)
 2004 - Portugal 26 Sept – 3 Oct. (Martin family and Mike/Kipper)
 2005 - Portugal 18 Sept – 23 Sept. (Martin family and Tom and Ursula)
 2006 – Portugal 14 July – 21 July. (Martin family)
 2006 – Madeira 2 Oct – 15 Oct
 2007 - Portugal 12 Feb – 26 Feb (Gerry/Brenda and Jo/Bob)

To summarise destinations and dates, the following list is preliminary and subject to errors and omissions

Brussels 1983, 1985. Wales 1988, 2000, Vienna 1993, Cyprus 2001, Isle of Man, 2001

CANADA,GREECE,MADEIRA,CANALS

My family heritage

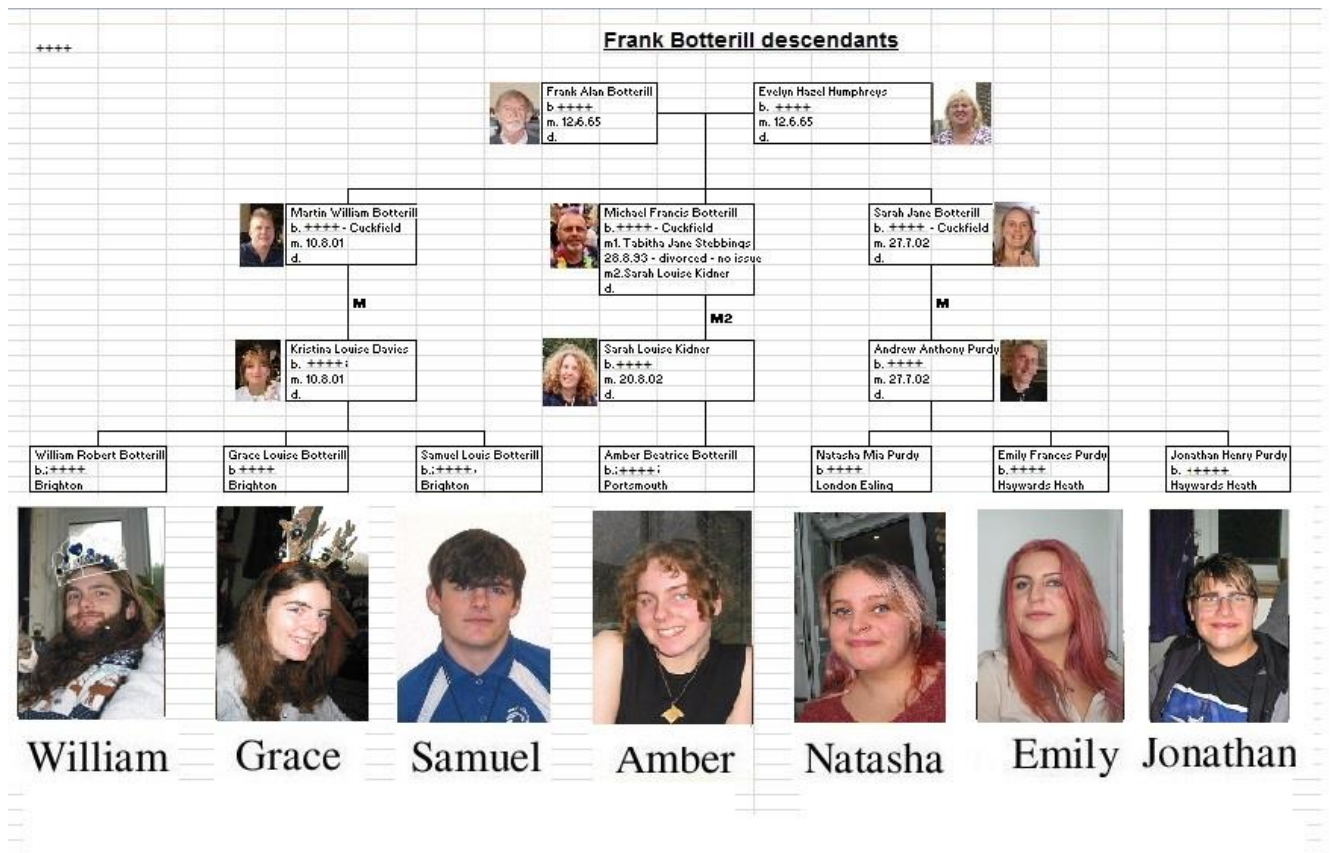


Tracing my family heritage has been a fascinating exercise, I have been fortunate to have received research undertaken by my late cousin Rodney Higgins. His documentation relates mainly to the Botterill arm of the family and is contained in a lever arch file. Similarly, there is a lever arch file containing documentation relating to the Green arm. I am indebted to my brother Norman for providing much of that history including research undertaken by the late William George Green (my mother's second cousin). My sister Audrey has also provided her recollections of the family history which are included in these files.

My own efforts have relied on internet searches to obtain information. Family trees have been shared on the social media platform Facebook specifically with family members (some living in Australia) and for public consumption.

The beauty of this research lies in tactile nature of the documentation obtained in its original form. For this reason little will be copied to this publication

My family



My Facebook page

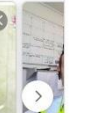
Microsoft Edge is no longer supported on this version of Windows. Upgrade to Windows 10 or later to get regular feature and security updates from Microsoft Edge. [Learn more](#)

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Intro

I live in Plumpton Green My life history is:-
<https://www.sussexwoodcraft.co.uk/FrankLifeRev12.pdf>

[Edit Bio](#)

Married

[sussexwoodcraft.co.uk/MyHomePage.index.htm](https://www.sussexwoodcraft.co.uk/MyHomePage.index.htm)

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Frank Botterill updated his profile picture.
7 April



You, Angela Braman, David Botterill and 7 others 2 comments

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View more comments

Catherine Holland
Happy Easter to you, Ev and the family 🐣🐣🐣

My motor cars



August 1962 - June 1969	Austin Healey Sprite - 70,152 miles
May 1969 - August 1974	Ford Anglia Estate - 50,000 miles
September 1973 - Nov. 1974	Fiat 500 (from father) - 7,000 miles
October 1974 - May 1979	Ford Cortina 1300 - 37,000 miles
February 1979 - March 1985	Ford Cortina 1600 auto - 65,700 miles
March 1985 - April 1989 - BMC Maestro 1300L	- 55,000 miles (sold to Martin)
September 1989 - January 1995	BMC Maestro 1.3 HLE - 140,000 miles (given to Sarah then Martin)
February 1986 - September 1988	BMC Mini - 24,000 miles
April 1989 - February 1994	Ford Fiesta - 36,600 miles
September 1991 - January 1997	BMC Metro - 37,957 miles (sold to Mike)
May 1994 - November 1997	BMC Rover 214 - 43,662 miles (sold to Martin)
March 1997 - April 2002	Citroen AX - 14,419 miles (from Maureen, sold to Sarah who then sold to Bernie)
November 1997 - November 2000	Vauxhall Astra 1.3 (sold to Mike)
November 2000 - November 2021	Vauxhall Astra 1.6 (written off - 92,600 miles)
December 1998	Renault Clio S181CYJ (scrapped)
March 2010	Renault Clio GU10WBT (exchanged)
May 2018 - present	Renault Clio MA67XMZ
November 2021 - present	Volkswagen Polo