Electronic File Organisation

I thought I'd share the method which I use for my Steers One-Name Study (ONS).

I have recently switched to using Family Historian (FH) software for the ONS, as I find it stops me from adding those 'shaky leaf hints' without thinking about it!

I keep all my information in an Excel spreadsheet so that I can easily track the source images / information. The main spreadsheet is imaginatively called the MASTER.
The MASTER has headings as follows, *with how I populate it in red italics*;

ID	*(which is created by FH)*	Probate	*(DD-MMM-YYYY)*
Surname		Will	*(Yes or No)*
Forename(s)		Grave Stone	*(Yes or No)*
Year Born		Census 1841	*(Image Ref)*
GRO Birth	*(Yes or No)*	Census 1851	*(Image Ref)*
Birth Cert	*(Yes or No)*	Census 1861	*(Image Ref)*
DoB	*(DD-MMM-YYYY)*	Census 1871	*(Image Ref)*
Baptism	*(DD-MMM-YYYY)*	Census 1881	*(Image Ref)*
Banns or Licence	*(Yes or No)*	Census 1891	*(Image Ref)*
GRO Marriage	*(Yes or No)*	Census 1901	*(Image Ref)*
Marriage Cert	*(Yes or No)*	Census 1911	*(Image Ref)*
Year of Marriage		Military	*(Yes or No)*
DoM	*(DD-MMM-YYYY)*	Directories	*(Yes or No)*
GRO Death	*(Yes or No)*	Newspapers	*(Yes or No)*
Death Cert	*(Yes or No)*	Criminal Record	*(Yes or No)*
Year of Death		Immigration	*(Yes or No)*
DoD	*(DD-MMM-YYYY)*	Emigration	*(Yes or No)*
Burial	*(Yes or No)*	Notes	
DoBur.	*(DD-MMM-YYYY)*		

Each of the above headers has a corresponding spreadsheet (or in the case of the Census returns a workbook with separate worksheets). These can be cross-referenced to ascertain the full information as everything is transcribed.

The Census images are recorded in a sequential order. Each image is given a number, therefore if a household run over two pages, there are two images required. My naming system for the census documents is as follows;

A.1841.E.001

A   = Ancestry, where I sourced the image. (If it was at FindMyPast it would be F etc.)
1841 = The date of the census.
E   = England (W = Wales; S = Scotland; I = Ireland etc.)
001 = This is the first image from the 1841 England census obtained from Ancestry.
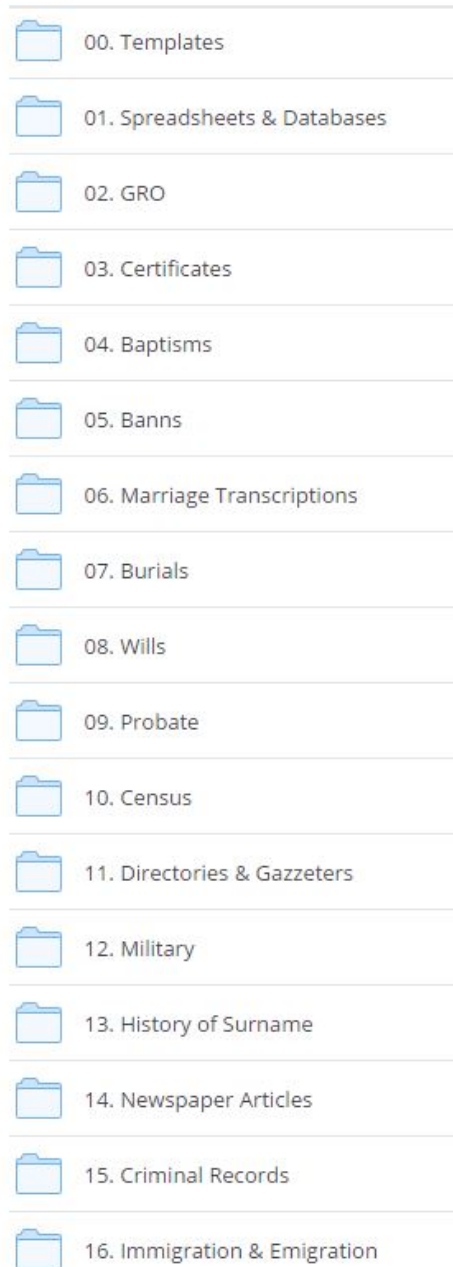
Baptisms, Burials, Probate etc. are recorded via SURNAME, Forename(s) - Date in Full as the spreadsheet for the event captures the ID of the concerned, along with all source information and transcription.

i.e. **BLOGGS, Joseph - 23 October 1982**

Marriages are recorded via GROOM SURNAME, Forename(s) & BRIDE SURNAME, Forename(s) - Date in Full.

i.e. ***BLOGGS, Joseph & DOE, Jane - 24 December 1986***

The Excel workbooks are kept in a numbered file structure so that they are easily findable. A screenshot can be seen below;

📁 00. Templates

📁 01. Spreadsheets & Databases

📁 02. GRO

📁 03. Certificates

📁 04. Baptisms

📁 05. Banns

📁 06. Marriage Transcriptions

📁 07. Burials

📁 08. Wills

📁 09. Probate

📁 10. Census

📁 11. Directories & Gazzeters

📁 12. Military

📁 13. History of Surname

📁 14. Newspaper Articles

📁 15. Criminal Records

📁 16. Immigration & Emigration

Within the Folders there are sub-folders, as seen below;

📁	01. Baptisms, Births and Christenings
📁	02. Marriages, Banns and Licences
📁	03. Burials, Deaths, Wills and Probate
📁	04. Directories and Electoral Registers
📁	05. Census
📁	06. Criminal and Transportation
📁	07. Occupation & Trade
📁	08. Military
📁	09. Newspapers
📁	10. Land and Taxes

This allows me to move quickly through my documentation as required.

Like many other genealogists Dropbox is my friend, everything is synced with the cloud service so that I can (1) be confident a hard drive crash won't result in me losing everything, and (2) access the information wherever I am, and the cross-referencing nature of the workbooks means that I don't necessarily have to have access to my Family Historian software if I want to explore possible connections whist out and about away from my laptop (yes, it does happen occasionally!)

This is a very short introduction to my filing system, and it doesn't include paper files (which I digitise for ease of access anyway), as my paper system is completely up the spout!

You will notice that I don't separate my files in to the surname or branch of the tree it belongs to. I used to do this, but found it didn't work for me as I was unable to easily locate what I needed. Names are recorded as they are in the record with maiden names in brackets occasionally when I'm sure that I've got the correct married person (there are lots of Elizabeth Davies's in Wales!) Filing by source type works best for me, but each person is different and therefore your filing system should work for you, but be logical so that others can follow your system should you not be around to guide them.

If you would like any further information, please get in touch and I'll try to explain more / help. I'm on Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook or you can just drop me an e-mail; steersonenamestudy@gmail.com