Backing up your Legacy Data

Why do you need to make backups?

Making regular backups (and storing them appropriately) is the best way to ensure that your family history research is not interrupted (or possibly ruined) by the loss of your carefully-collected data.

You need to protect against three possible causes of loss of data. They are flaws in the software, hardware failure, and user error. Although we do not like to admit it, the third cause is the most likely to affect most users. At some point in your research, you will do something silly that corrupts part of your family file. If you have a recent backup then you can wind back the clock to before the error and go on with your work without drama.

All computer hardware, but particularly storage, has a limited lifespan. Some part of your system will fail at a very inconvenient time and take your current family file with it. With a backup of your data stored on another system, you can quickly download and install a new copy of the Legacy program, and recommence work almost immediately.

Like all software developers, Millennium Corporation tries very hard to avoid bugs in its program updates. But there have been cases where adding a new feature has broken some other part of the program. It can spoil the excitement of using the latest version to discover that some of your data is gone — unless you have a backup that has not been affected.

What gets backed up?

Legacy will create two types of archive file. One holds your data (names, dates and places) and the other holds your media (images etc).


You have the option to omit either type (for example, if you have not added any new pictures, you may choose not make a new media backup) because the last one is still current. You can also choose not to copy some types of data of short-term value (such as the clipboard or focus group settings) to save space; but in most cases, the memory they use will be too small to be of concern.

When should you back-up?

You should agree to make a backup at any time that the program prompts you to do so.
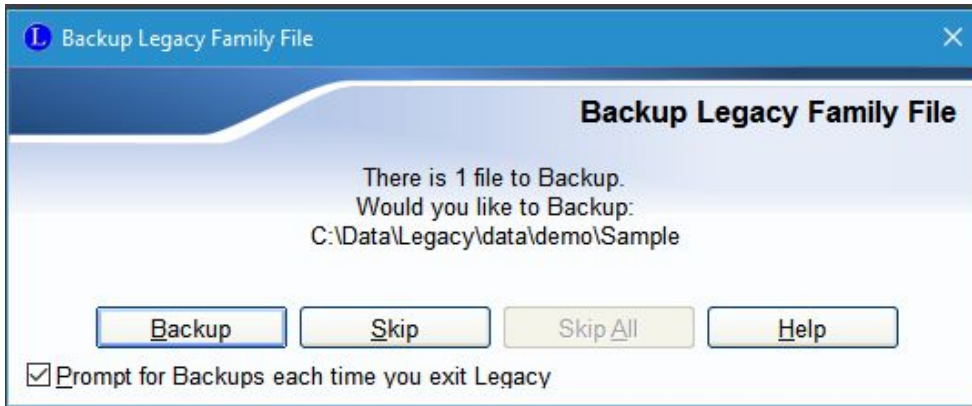

That will be each time a family file is shut down and before certain actions (such as importing new people or merging individuals) that may have unexpected effects. (Note that you could turn off this reminder by unticking the box, but that is not recommended).

In addition, you should make an extra backup before you carry out any procedure that you do not fully understand. Remember that the backup made yesterday does not include any of the changes you have made to your family file today. You can save hours of work by a simple procedure that takes less than a minute.

How do you run a backup?

If the software prompts you to make a backup, then you simply need to agree to its suggestion by clicking the Backup button in the window (as shown in the image above). To start the process yourself, go the **File** menu
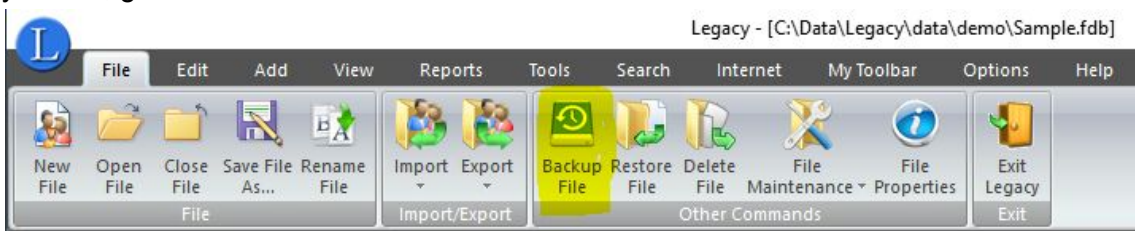
and click on the **Backup File** menu button. If you wish, you can make a copy of that button on your **My Toolbar** to save changing menus,

What are the backup files called?

By default, the files are given the same name as the Family File from which they are made. So if you backup *bailey.fdb*, you will create *bailey.zip* and *bailey-media.zip*. You have the option to change that pattern, but it is difficult to think of a good reason to do so (although some users like to change the data file backup to *bailey-data.zip*).

Depending upon the options that you specify (see below), there may be a date and time added at the end of the name (such as *bailey-media 2016-09-10 2.53.31 PM.zip)*.

How many backups should you keep?

In the early days of business computing, the standard procedure was to store all backups made during the current work day, plus one backup from each day of the last week, plus one from each Friday of the current month, plus one from the last day of each month of this year, and the last backup of each year since the beginning of the project.

For our purposes that may be excessive, but many family historians recommend that you should keep as many backup files as you have storage space for, because you never know when you may need an old copy. In order for that to be useful, you need to know the order in which the files were created so you work back through them to locate the one that is error-free.To give each file a unique name which includes its date and time of creation, you can tick both the Date and Time options.
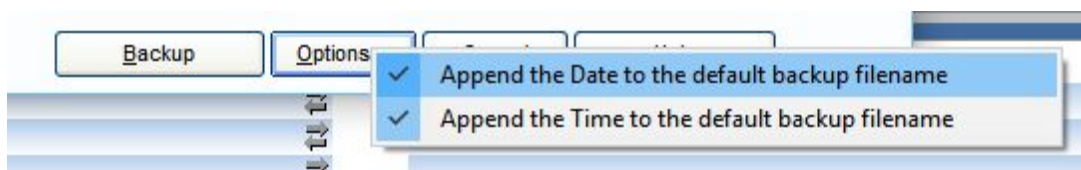

If you select only the Date option, then two backups made on the same day will have the same names and each new one will overwrite the older one.

If you leave both boxes unticked, all backups made from the one family file will have the same name. So a backup made today will overwrite the one made when you shut down yesterday; unless you have made another copy (see below).

## Where are the backups placed?

It is important to realise that where the software places the zip files it makes is not necessarily where you will finally store them. For many reasons, you may want to move them to another store or to make copies of them.

The software allows you to change the original location where the files are placed at any time but you can always find the current setting (and then alter it, if necessary) by clicking on the *Back Up File* button.
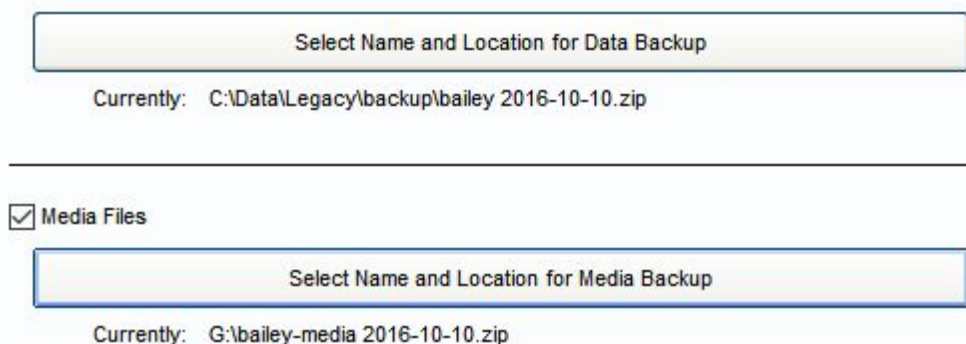

You can select a USB stick (or other external storage such as G:\ drive in the example above) as the location to be used but remember that it must be connected to the computer each time you make a backup or the process will behave unpredictably.

Note that you can (but are not required to) select the same location for both data and media files, when you change the choice for either of them.
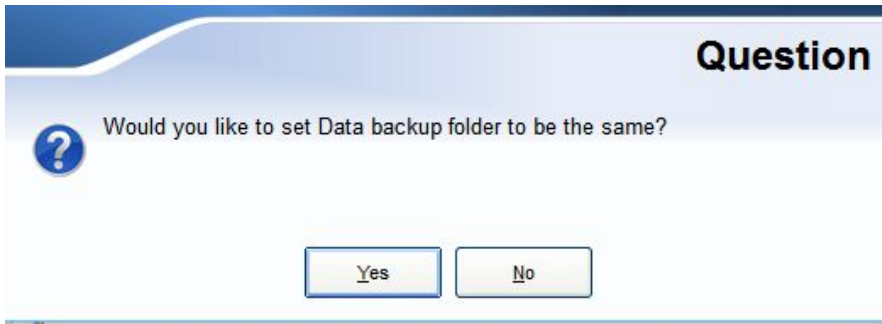
If you have a "cloud storage" service linked to your computer (such as OneDrive, DropBox or Google Drive), then you can specify that the backup be stored in one of the folders that is automatically synchronised to that store via your internet connection.
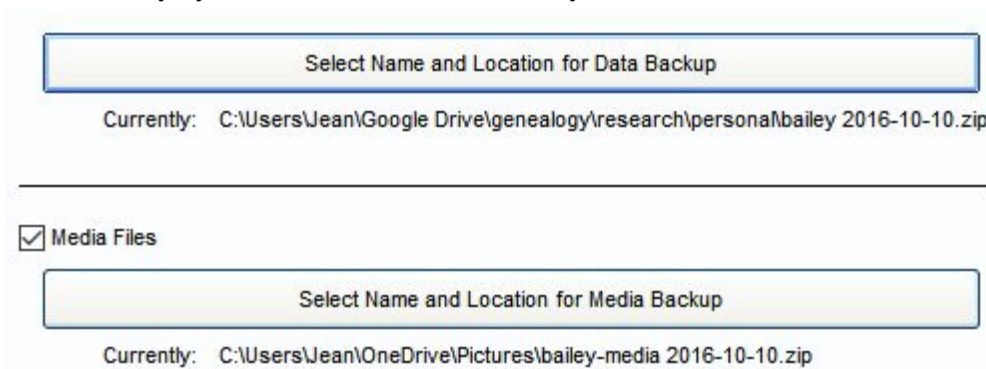

As in this example, you could even use two different "clouds" for the different file types (although there is no sensible reason to do so). Remember also that the backup is actually placed on your local hard drive when it is made and duplicated to the "cloud" later (when your internet connection is available and not doing anything else more urgent).

How can you "back up" the backups?

If there is a risk of your main computer failing, then backup archives stored on its hard drive may not be able to be accessed when you need them most. The solution is to make additional copies of the zip files that can be stored in different locations. The use of USB sticks or cloud storage mentioned above is one way to achieve this, but there other ways.

Wherever you choose to store your backups, it may be useful to create a "shortcut" that will give you quick access without needing to open the Legacy program to search each time you want to check them. Simply click on the folder with the right mouse button, then select *Send to … Desktop (as a shortcut)* from the menu.
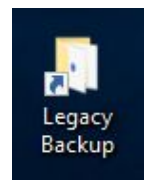
Clicking on that shortcut will open up a file manager window that shows a list of all the backup files you have created. That list can be sorted into date order to place the most recent at the top. From that list you can select one, several, or all the files and copy them ready to paste into another storage location.

Can this be automated?

Windows includes a command called *robocopy* that can be used to look inside a specified folder on your computer, make a list of any files there that are newer than those in another folder on a different store, copy those new files into the other folder, and then write a report on what it has done.

Here is an example of a command

```
robocopy <original location>  <new location>  /np /log:backup_log.txt
```

that can be saved as a one line program (called *LegacyBackups.bat* and saved in G:\) with the correct locations for your setup substituted as in this example.

```
robocopy C:\Data\Legacy\backup G:\LegacyBackups /np /log:backup_log.txt
```

If you wished the <new location> specified can be the pathway from your hard drive to your favourite cloud store, so that this program

```
robocopy C:\Data\Legacy\backup C:\Users\Bob\OneDrive\Public\Legacy /np
/log:backup_log.txt
```

would copy my backups to where other family members (to whom I have given the link) could download them to open on their own computer.