



I've found some Common Ancestors for my matches – which way now?

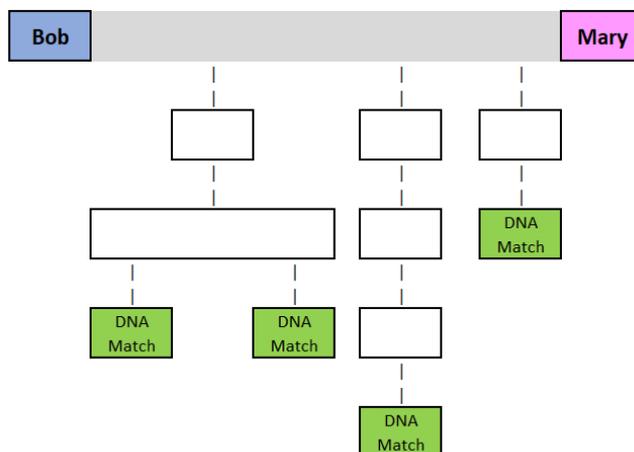
May I introduce you to Bob and Mary? For the purposes of this example, you have divided your match list into Shared Match Groups, built Floating Branches and realised that Bob and Mary are a Common Ancestor to several of the matches within this group.

If several of your matches are descendants of Bob and Mary, then Bob and/or Mary must be significant in some way to your research.

The all-important question is *why?*

Could Bob and Mary be your Grandparents? Great-Grandparents? Or maybe you're related to Bob's family but not Mary's? Is Bob's Great-Great-Grandmother the link between you all?

Here are some steps you can follow to discover which options might be relevant:



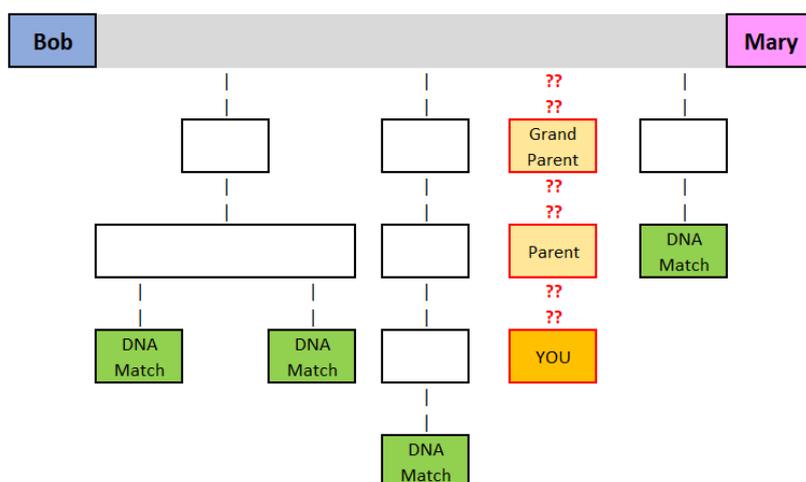
Why are Bob and Mary relevant to your search?

- **Could you be a descendant of Bob and Mary?**
 - How closely related are you to the DNA Matches you've added to this Floating Branch? Do you share enough DNA to be (roughly) second cousins/closer?
 - Can you find other DNA Matches who are related to Bob's parents/grandparents *as well as* Mary's parents/grandparents? That would indicate that you have inherited DNA from both Bob and Mary, so you are likely to be a descendant of one of their children.
 - If this is the case, Bob and Mary might be your Direct Line Ancestors too.

Although you can't predict exactly where you belong within their family, you can start looking at "what if..." scenarios.

If you share enough DNA with some of these matches to be their second cousin, then perhaps you would be Bob and Mary's Great-Grandchild?

Your parent would be their Grandchild, your Grandparent would be their child.

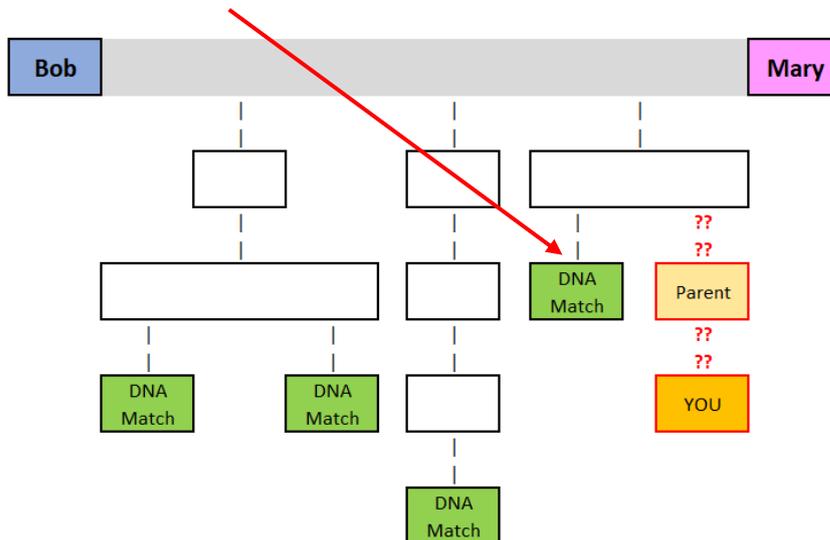


If this option appeared likely, you would need to concentrate your research on Bob and Mary's descendants until you have found people who are the right age/in the right location to be the person you are trying to find. You would also need to look for connections to matches in other Shared Match Groups through the spouses of Bob and Mary's children and grandchildren.



▪ **Are you more closely related to one of the DNA Matches than the others?**

- Look at the amount of DNA you share with each of the DNA Matches within the group. Do you share more DNA with one of the DNA Matches than the others?
- This might mean that you are more closely related to one particular match – for example, if you shared enough DNA, could **this match** be your Aunt/Uncle?

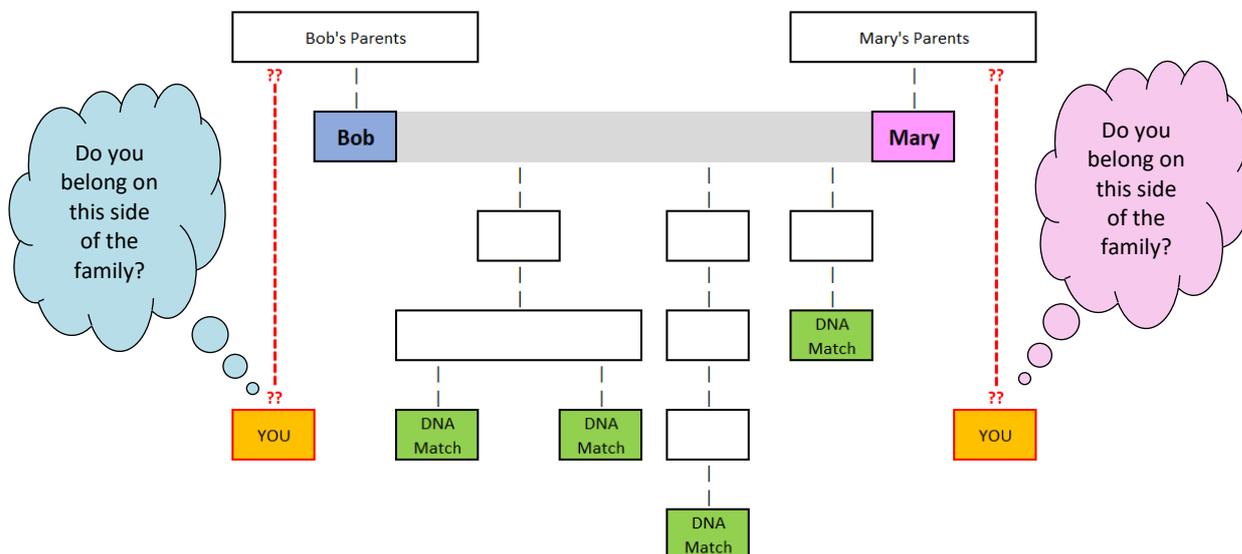


- Find out ALL of the possible relationships that might fit with the cMs you share and work out where you would fit within the tree for each relationship in turn.

▪ **Are you more distantly related to these DNA Matches than being a potential 2nd cousin?**

- Use the amount of shared DNA/possible relationships to get an idea of how far back your connection to Bob/Mary might be. If you/the matches could be potential 3rd cousins, might you be related to this group via Bob or Mary's parents?
- Can you find other DNA Matches who are related to only Bob's ancestors or only Mary's ancestors? Do some more research – extend this branch back so you know the surnames of all Bob and Mary's parents and grandparents. Search for these surnames in the trees of matches within the group. Can you find more Common Ancestors within this Shared Match Group?

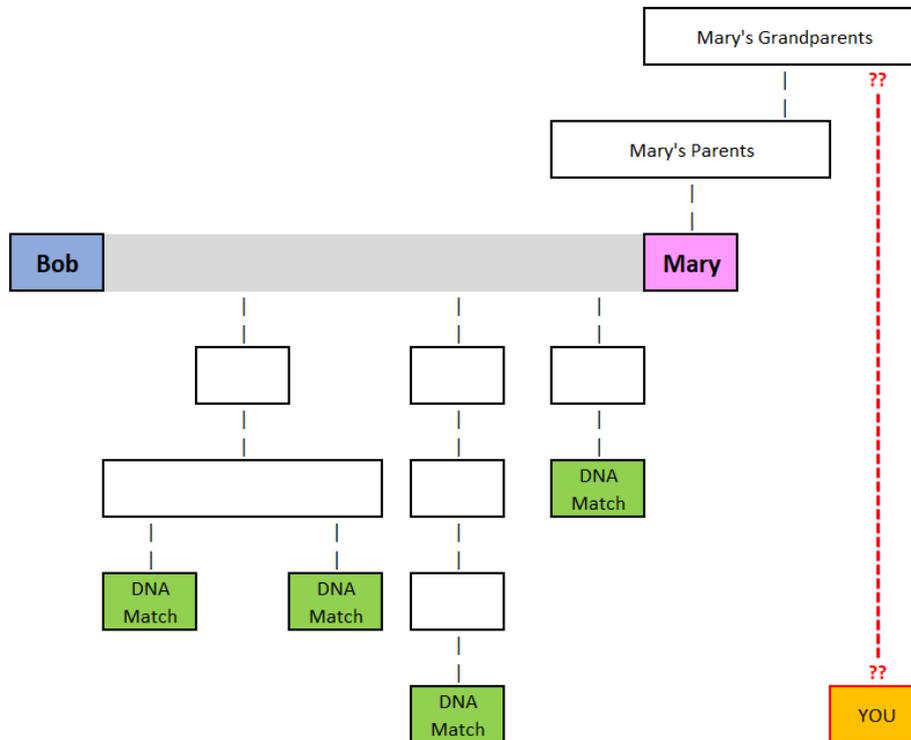
Perhaps you are related to just Bob's family or just Mary's family – not both. Maybe Bob or Mary had children with a different spouse/partner – might you be a half-cousin of some sort?





▪ **Or are you even more distantly related to these DNA Matches?**

Not everyone has 2nd/3rd cousins to work with. If you have been working with 3rd/4th cousin matches, your relationship with Bob or Mary could be through ancestors who are several generations further back in this branch, for example:



- Keep tree building.
- Look for connections to the matches within this Shared Match Group to try to confirm which branch of Bob/Mary's family is relevant.
- Keep searching your match list for the extra surnames and locations that appear as you extend this branch.

If you have run out of ideas for this Shared Match Group, move on to a different group.

By now, you should now have a lot of surnames and locations embedded in your brain from researching this group – maybe something will pop up when you research the next group that gives the vital clue as to how these groups are connected?