

THE Y-DNA PROJECT

Quarterly report from Elizabeth O'Donoghue, the Society's Group Administrator

Over this last quarter, we have had upgrades in the Glens tribe, plus a new member there, a new member in each of the Cavan/Breifne tribes, and a new member of the main 'Unaffiliated' cluster. This member has also ordered the Deep Clade test, which will help determine if the subclade to which our Donnachie participant belongs – R1b1b2a1b4 – is likely to be a defining SNP U152 for this cluster as a whole.

Eóin Ó Donnchadha is exploring his null 425 haplotype and has ordered a Deep Clade test which might prove useful in better identifying the tribe to which he belongs. He has DYF371X results tested, which are recommended for those with a null 425. Will report next time if anything significant comes from them as well.

As you all know, our yDNA Project is a surname project focused on male line inheritance. While some participants have ordered mtDNA tests (mitochondrial DNA, inherited only from the mother), I have little expertise in this aspect of DNA testing and interpretation and have not been actively involved with reviewing the results with anyone. However, Family Tree has introduced a new product they call Family Finder, which may be useful for those of O'Donoghue ancestry who have no male relative available for testing the Y chromosome but would like to see if they could identify their O'Donoghue lineage.

Family Finder tests atDNA – autosomal DNA – which is inherited from both parents. If someone of the same heritage tests as well as yourself, it may be possible to identify a common heritage. I repeat – *possible* – since it passes on to the child in an unpredictable combination. As Family Tree describes it, it may provide information back five generations, but you can never be sure which side of the family it came from, so if you find someone who matches to a significant enough degree, it's still fishing through possibly all five generations and all their relatives to discover where you might match. Some people are researching all their grandparents' surnames, as far back as they can go with paper records, so for them, it would be useful.

One point to consider is that the database will initially be rather small, compared to the yDNA data available for comparison. It's only been available for a few months in 'beta testing'. It matches somewhat what the company '23 and Me' had been doing, and there is some overlap in sites tested, so those using Family Tree are hoping to compare to 23 and Me data as well. And anyone tested with 23 and Me previously can load their data onto the Family Tree search site to compare.

One of our participants has just ordered the test, and we should have results in by mid-May. It will be a challenge to learn about how to interpret the results, and I'll have more for you next report.

If you are interested in the Family Finder tests, you can find a link on your personal page at Family Tree. For those of you who are not currently participants yourselves, go to: <https://www.familytreedna.com/landing/family-finder.aspx> and find out more about it. The highlights of their page explaining the product are:

Match with five generations of family

With the Family Finder test you may extend the power of genetic genealogy to all of your ancestors. You can discover connections to descendants of all sixteen of your great-great-grandparents!

The next revolution in genetic genealogy

The science is simple—linked blocks of DNA across the 22 autosomal chromosomes are matched between two people. The degree of matching yields evidence for the relationship. You have exciting opportunities!

Adoptees discover their heritage

With the power of an autosomal DNA test, confidently match to male and female cousins from any of your family lines. This can provide you with the clues you need to learn more about your birth parents' families.

If your focus is on finding out about your patrilineal ancestry, I'd say it wouldn't be a priority option from my point of view. Eventually, I would anticipate that the technology to do the tests will improve and the price will come down, particularly now that 23 and Me has some competition. If you are thinking about it but not too pushed to do it now, I'd wait till the database has increased and the price may come down – but that could be a year or more.

I anticipate that there will be a summer offering from Family Tree for reduced prices for upgrades. Any of you who have not yet tested to 67 markers will be notified as and when the sale is on.

Please let me know if you have any suggestions to improve the yDNA link. The updated spreadsheets will be online shortly.