
Proof of Liverpool's Viking past

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Science correspondent

The region around Liverpool was once a major Viking settlement, according to a genetic study of men living in the area.

The research tapped into this Viking ancestry by focusing on people whose surnames were recorded in the area before its population underwent a huge expansion during the industrial revolution. Among men with these "original" surnames, 50% have Norse ancestry.

The find backs up historical evidence from place names and archaeological finds of Viking treasure which suggests significant numbers of Norwegian Vikings settled

in the north-west in the 10th century. "[The genetics] is very exciting because it ties in with the other evidence from the area," said Professor Stephen Harding at the University of Nottingham, who carried out the work with a team at the University of Leicester led by Professor Mark Jobling.

They used historical documents, including a tax register from the time of Henry VIII, to identify surnames common in the region. They then recruited 77 male volunteers with "original" surnames, and looked for a genetic signature of Viking ancestry on the Y chromosome. They report in *Molecular Biology and Evolution* that a Y chromosome type, R1a, common in Norway, is also very common among men with original surnames.
