

Ormskirk & West Lancs

Champion

3 October 2007

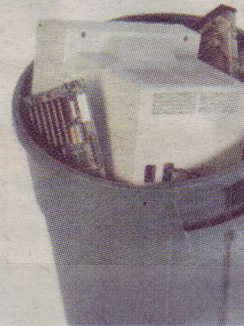
Vol 14 • Issue 40

www.ChampNews.com



Do you have Viking blood?

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The Champion • Wednesday 3 October 2007

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Natives are of viking stock

West Lancs' Scandinavian legacy revealed in DNA tests

MORE than half of native West Lancs residents are descended from Vikings, a study has revealed.

DNA tests on 100 residents in the district have been compared with people from around Europe, showing that 50% of their ancestors originated in Scandinavia.

"The results came out really, really well," one of the team leading the research, Prof Stephen Harding told The Champion.

"We also tested Wirral and the West Lancs results came out slightly better."

A large survey was carried out in 2002 to find people suitable for the DNA test.

Tests were done on the Y chromosome - only found in men - so volunteers had to be male and have male ancestors who also lived in the district.

They also needed to have a surname that was present in the area in medieval times, or was a place name in the area.

by **Natasha Robson**

"There are some problems through adoptions but generally the surname is a good marker," Prof Harding, of the University of Nottingham, said.

"The Y chromosome is passed along the line from father to son without much change - it is a marker for ancestry. The West Lancs Heritage Association were extremely good in helping select the volunteers."

Participants were given their test results several years ago, but the statistical analysis of the group has only just been completed and is due to be published shortly.

Genetic markers were compared with samples from across Europe.

Prof Harding explained: "Most people had matches from across the continent, but you will find that those matches

occur more frequently in some countries than others. We can show that 50% of the blood of men in old West Lancs is Scandinavian."

The tests were carried out after the popular TV series *Blood of the Vikings* did similar tests in other parts of the country.

The study was titled "Excavating past population structures by surname-based sampling: the genetic legacy of the Vikings in northwest England".

To celebrate the results Prof Harding along with other project leaders Prof Mark Jobling of the University of Leicester and Prof Judith Jesch of the University of Nottingham will give a presentation on Lancashire Day - Tuesday, November 27.

The event at David Lloyd Leisure Centre, Knowsley, is hosted by West Lancashire Heritage Association. For tickets (£6) contact Patrick Waite on 01695 573350.