

DNA

Using DNA to enhance your family history research.

In 2003 I started studying my family history. The 2011 census had come on line and it sparked an interest that has led me to running a one-name study and a DNA project on my maiden name Brewerton.

Many people have been researching for much longer than I have. Even in 2003 there was limited information on line. You travelled to registry offices' and bought cd's of the various censuses.

When DNA started to be discussed both on line and via the Guild of One Name Studies I was rather dismissive. I thought it was only for the geeky end of the spectrum, certainly nothing that I would get involved in. I think truthfully that I thought I would never be able to understand the scientific side of it.

However, I began to read more about it and realized what a great tool it would be for my Brewerton one-name study which can be found at www.onenamedstudy.tribalpages.com.

So it has proved. Two years ago there were 8 separate trees on the study. DNA has shown that some of them are actually the same tree and equally importantly has shown that trees that were thought to be connected are not.

It has broken down brick walls and opened up avenues that were beyond expectation.

I have kept it simple. For men there is the Y-test. All males carry the Y gene which is passed from father to son and down the male line. I test a minimum of Y-37 which means that 37 markers are matched against other men.

For men and women there is the autosomal test which shows up to 5 generations of connectivity from both parents.

However, Y DNA is the most important test to see if lines do actually connect.

Recently, my father has distantly connected to a Brereton male. Since my earliest Brewerton came from Cheshire I am very interested in finding out more on this name.

I use the company www.familytreedna.com . This is an excellent site which has the added bonus of being able to test Europeans as well as people in the USA. Some of the other sites only test in the USA and they also have projects. There is now a Brereton DNA project run by Michael Sandford. This project has just started but already shows that there are at least 2

distinct Brereton lines. Three men have tested and one is in the process of transferring his results from another site. <http://www.worldfamilies.net/surnames/brereton/>

DNA testing has greatly enhanced my enjoyment of learning about my family history. My parents, both in their late 80's have been tested and have been very engaged with the results. I would urge anyone with an interest in their family tree to consider testing.

Below I am going to copy a document outlining the frequently asked questions about DNA testing. Whilst they relate to the Brewerton project the same principles will apply to the Brereton project.

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