The Genetic History of Wales

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Over the past 5 years we have been studying DNA samples kindly provided by men with family origins across north and mid Wales.

The original aim of the project was to use genetics to look for evidence of the prehistoric settlers at the Bronze Age copper mines of Parys Mountain and the Great Orme. However our research identified something unexpected.

Across north Wales we discovered evidence for geographically clustered groups of men sharing the same Y chromosome genetic markers. The Y chromosome is inherited from father to son, so these groups represent individual lineages descended from a small number of patriarchs. Further genetic analysis suggests these patriarchs lived during the medieval period.

The medieval period is one of the most significant eras in Welsh history, and it seems that many of the people in Wales will be able to trace their families back to a small number of medieval families. Remarkably because of excellent genealogical and taxation records we can in some cases identify these patriarchs.

We invite you to come along and hear more about our findings. We will also explain why we are interested in obtaining DNA from men with family history in Breconshire.