

THE Y-DNA PROJECT

October 2011

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

Family Tree has begun a new initiative in promoting avenues of searching for matches for those who are adopted. There is an Adopted project specifically designated for them, administered by Max Blankfeld of Family Tree, and those who belong to it have a notice on their personal page:

Action Required!

As a member of the Adopted Project, you could have matches in other projects that you may not be able to see just yet. As an added security measure, some users have opted to restrict their information to members of the groups they have joined. To see these matches you can join these groups as well.

Though the project currently has 1248 members, it does not display the results, so I'm not sure what usefulness it has except giving the members the notice above to encourage them to join other surname projects. This may be responsible for an increase of men of other surnames joining our project over the last months. Family Tree provides a list of projects where they have matches, with the highest number of matches listed first. This has no bearing on how close the matches may be. In general, they are not that closely allied with any of our members, and after communicating with the gentlemen, I am encouraging them to drop out of our project. I see no benefit to them after their initial inquiry, and we wish to keep our project focused on those of the name or those who have a close genetic distance with men in our project which is usually closer than to others of their own surname.

Between the 1000 Genome Project and the increasing number of Walk-the-Y tests among genetic genealogy enthusiasts, there has been a plethora of recently discovered SNP's that are helping distinguish the branches on the haplotree. Many of them are found in R1b1a, but most of them are for haplotypes different to those present in our project. If anything comes up that might relate to any of our project members, I will let them know.

As it happens, Tighe O'Donoghue/Ross was approached by a researcher who felt his value in the 68-111 panel – a 9 at DYS639 - indicated the possibility that he might be a member of a subclade recently discovered, distinguished by the SNP of DF21. We ordered the test and he returned positive. We tested for two more SNP's related to this one and he is also positive for DF5 and Z248, both downstream from DF21, though the placement of Z248 is still not certain. Though it is early days, the age of DF21 has been estimated to be over 3,000 years, and it includes a disparate group of haplotypes who have little pattern of marker values in common other than the 9 at DYS643.

At my suggestion, Rod also tested for DF21, and to my great surprise, his result was negative. This 'was totally unexpected and calls into question their relatedness, which had never been an issue – only the distance of their common ancestor. I've asked

Family Tree to confirm that the negative result is accurate – there is always a small possibility of error.

Assuming that the different results are accurate, Tighe has suggested that there could have been a long standing relationship between his familial ancestors and Rod's that dates back to the time of the origin of DF21 and that the families maintained their closeness throughout the centuries, which (if we are to give credence to the general accuracy of the Milesian myth and the coming of the Gaels into Ireland) dates back prior to their arrival in Ireland and includes the sojourn in the east and the apparent Scythian connection their haplotype has with the Eastern Celts. (See *The Enigma of the Eóganacht Genetic Signature and the 'Scythian Marker'* in the October 2010 Journal). This scenario is possible, but from my own point of view, not terribly likely. It would mean that Tighe's and Rod's ultimate ancestors would have to have been the originator of the DF21 mutation. I wouldn't want to calculate the odds.

Another possibility is that there has been a back mutation of the SNP in Rod's lineage (along with the whole cluster of men in his subgroup). While back mutations can theoretically occur, it is less likely that would happen with an SNP than with an STR marker. There is little chance in either case that it could ever be confirmed, unless it was tested amidst participants who know they have a common ancestor through a paper trail and some return negative and others a positive result. If more participants test, there is the chance that one would have a differing result, but not a great one.

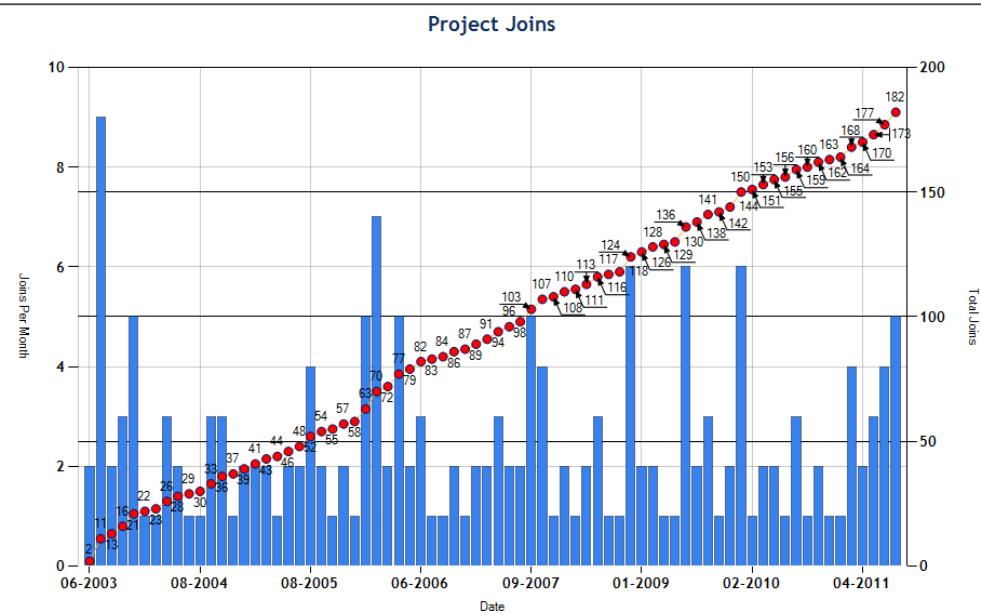
This leaves me in a huge quandary and calls into question the designation we have made of the O'Donoghue Mór tribe and who are part of it. In principle, Tighe and Rod do not belong to the same group. But that clearly makes no sense. The commonality of name, the propinquity of their families' geographical origins, the similarity of pattern of their haplotypes, all point positively to a relationship. To consider all this mere coincidence is illogical. Unexpected test results have never created such a nonsequitur, and I will continue to research to see what might mitigate this strange dilemma.

This quarter, we have three new members of The Glens tribe, two of them of other surnames, and two with 68-111 results. We have a new member of the Breifne Group A, though only 12 markers have come in so far. The last of the 68-111 panel results are in for a participant in Breifne Group D. There is also a new member of the Group IV/ Leinster modal group.

In our tentative Teallach Modharain group, I have added the modal for the Clan Colla 425 null project, which these two men match. The late Joe Donohoe discovered and labelled this cluster as his Airgilla I in his comprehensive annual report of 2009.

Family Tree provides various bits of information on its Group Administrator pages, not all of which is transmitted in the reports and spreadsheets we offer on the Society website. I have copied here, for your interest, the Project Joins graph that they produce. You will see a steady stream of new participants since the inception of the project in June of 2003. We've made a great deal of progress since then. (This does

not differentiate between female participants who have joined for the mtDNA tests – but there are only four of them.



If anyone finds inaccuracies in the data or has suggestions to improve the site, please let us know.