

Who do you think you were?

The family history website, ancestry.co.uk has just published (July 2016) a survey entitled **AncestryDNA** which seeks to establish and clarify the genetic and ethnic make-up of your average Brit. This survey is based upon the evidence provided by the many individuals who have paid (quite a lot!) to Ancestry to have their personal DNA tested as part of their family history research. The result is a perhaps surprising greater diversity amongst our population than many might have imagined.

The average person is about 37% British, i.e. Anglo-Saxon, whose genes have been passed down from those invaders from across the North Sea who filled the gap left by the departed Romans. Generally speaking those who live closer to the Eastern side of England are more Germanic than those in the west, and Yorkshire men and women have the highest count of Anglo-Saxon genes, forming some 41% of their genetic inheritance. It is the make-up of the remaining 63% which is perhaps more intriguing. We each contain a richer mixture of genes than we might have expected, with contributions to our blood line from the Irish, 21%, to the Russians, 1%, with contributions in between from the Iberian Peninsula, Italy and Greece, as well as Western Europe. As Brad Argent of AncestryDNA commented: *"we're not as British or Irish as we may think. The UK has been a cultural and ethnic melting pot for not just generations, but centuries...."*

But fans of Roman Britain who might harbour a secret desire for a little touch of Julius Caesar in their ancestry may feel disappointed that the "Romans" do not appear as one of the DNA groups listed in the survey. Surely after membership of the Roman Empire for 400 years we should all bear some trace of their one time presence amongst us. The answer to this is simple. There was never an ethnic group known as the "Romans," for the membership of the Roman Empire consisted of a wide range of different peoples, from Syria to Spain, North Africa to Scotland, and all points in between, each with its own distinctive DNA. This broad genetic mix inevitably formed part of the Roman forces which occupied and almost certainly settled in this country. There may be those amongst who have a blood link with our Roman past, but it will not be wearing anything so obvious as a toga.

WHERE OUR ANCESTORS CAME FROM			
British	36.94%	Italy/Greece	1.98%
Irish	21.59%	Eastern Europe	1.84%
Western Europe	19.91%	European Jewish	1.46%
Scandinavia	9.2%	Finland/	
Iberian Peninsula	3.05%	North-west Russia	1%

Genetic make-up of the average UK resident

Our individual genetic make-up according to Ancestry DNA