



Discoveries for One-Name Studies from DNA Testing

By Susan Meates

I enjoy hearing from Guild member's about their DNA experiences, at any time, whether getting started or passing a mile stone in their project or having unexpected results. I thought it might interest you to learn about some of the situations encountered as members get started. Below are the experiences reported by 3 members, presented in alphabetical order.

Each getting started experience is different, although they are all the same in one sense. Guild members discover new information with DNA testing.

If you have a DNA Project, write me at any time for help, or to tell me about your project: DNA@one-name.org



Horsman DNA Project

By Sue Horsman
Horsman / Horseman

For many years I have researched my HORS(E)MAN ancestors in Yorkshire, and still hope that one day I will find the death of my elusive ancestor and 'brick wall', John Horseman who married at Pateley Bridge in 1808.

Through my searches I have amassed a considerable amount of information about the various Hors(e)man families in Yorkshire, and that was the start of my HORSMAN One Name Study.

Within GOONS I noticed the growing interest in DNA testing as part of family history research, but always thought, 'that's not for me'. However late in 2007, I realised that my father was 84 years old, and I knew of one other male member of my confirmed Horsman tree. It struck me that one day, it would be too late, and father would have joined the ancestors, and my female DNA would be no help with my Horsman quest.

I contacted Susan Meates, and with her help, set up the Horsman DNA project with FamilyTreeDNA. When he was younger, Father was keen on family history, and readily agreed to take part; becoming the first project member.

There is a large Hors(e)man family, originally centred on Ripon, which I believe is the initial starting point for many of the different Hors(e)man families in the area.

My first letter was to a person who belonged to a Horsman 'twig' to which I suspect my ancestor John belonged, although there is no proven connection between this family, my family and the main Ripon family. Sadly my letter was totally ignored. If he told me that the test was too expensive, then, I'm sure that the problem could have been resolved.

A new member joined the project, descended from a family in Devon. His DNA was totally different, but at least this provides a starting point for that area.

I was then able to make contact with a member of the 'main' Ripon tree, now living in Australia, and he was keen to take part. He was shortly followed by someone, descended from a family from Leeds, whose results I'm still awaiting.



Thomas William Horsman, 1871-1912.

Sue Horsman's Great-grandfather, taken around 1895

The 'Eureka moment' came when the results of the Australian Horsman arrived. On the 37 marker test he was an exact match with my father. This means that there is a 99.29% probability that they shared an ancestor 11 generations ago. That sounds like a long time, but makes sense as the analysis of the main Hors(e)man family tree indicates that that is where things became unclear in the Parish registers, and a lack of wills makes it difficult to reconstitute the families.

I was thrilled by this match as it indicates that my ancestors do belong to the 'main' Ripon family; although I realise that I may never discover the exact point of contact.

I am hoping that other male Hors(e)man's are willing to join the project, and not just those with Yorkshire ancestry. Although the project is small — there is plenty of time for it to grow !



Pettypool DNA Project

By Carolyn Hartsough

Pettypool, P'Pool, P.Pool, Pettipool

Becoming group administrator for the Pettypool DNA Project is merely the latest detour on a journey that began nearly 30 years ago. Like most obsessive quests, it all started innocently enough. My mom's family, as is true of most Pettypool descendants, had no knowledge that Pool, the surname by which they had always been known, was originally Pettypool. Upon discovery of this surprising fact, my path was set. Sorting out the tangled family branches descending from the mid-17th century American immigrant became a personal passion.

Like other descendants of 17th century American immigrants, many Pettypool branches were on the leading edge of frontier settlement, their legacy to family historians being one of severed connections and sporadically kept or lost records. While I was aware of the promise of DNA genealogy for bringing order to scrambled lineages, I initially considered the hurdle of learning a new methodology too daunting. There was also the problem of convincing my one remaining male relative (my uncle) to sign on for the project. I suspected from informal conversation that he was concerned about the potential misuses of DNA samples. All this was in my mind when Susan Meates started encouraging Guild members to take advantage of this unique new tool for informing surname studies.

Under Susan's expert tutelage, I decided to take the plunge about 9 months ago. Surprisingly, my uncle agreed immediately to my request for the initial sample. I think he was won over by knowledge that he was my only hope for a sample from our branch of the family. It

probably also helped that I offered to pay for the test. My second recruit, the son of a deceased third cousin, also readily agreed to join the project after brief reassurances about FamilyTreeDNA security and confidentiality procedures. As administrator, I also have been gratified to find that FamilyTreeDNA offers excellent support in web site management, resources for interpretation of results and periodical sales promotions to assist administrators in attracting new recruits.

When my uncle's results were posted, two almost perfect matches among pre-existing participants came to light — one Poole participant with suspected Pettypool connections and the other of a completely unrelated surname. These two also joined the Pettypool Project. Although it's still early in the project's life, the current participants' enthusiasm has been rewarding, as have the improved prospects for resolving some long-standing lineage puzzles. I have enjoyed this new direction for exploration of the Pettypool surname and actually have found it much less intimidating than expected.



Wiley D. P. Pool (Pettypool)
1851-1896

Carolyn Hartsough's Great-grandfather. He is the grandfather of the first member of the Pettypool DNA Project.



Sterry DNA Project

By Robert Sterry

Sterry, Starry, Sterrey, Sterrie, Stirrey, Stirry

Our Project started in mid-December 2007. It actually took quite a while for me to make up my mind to start a STERRY DNA Project and I had been watching developments for the previous 12 months. I had of course read the articles in the GOONS Journal and anything else that I came across. However, having spent the past 15 years pursuing traditional documentary pathways, I was still very unsure about this new tool. Towards the end of last year I decided to contact Susan Meates about starting my own Project. Susan's encouragement helped me to finally 'take the plunge'. My test kit arrived on the 3rd of January 2008. By this time I had only let a small number of the principal STERRY family researchers know about the Project and of course had created a DNA Profile and webpage and linked them to my main STERRY One-Name Study website. Although they were all very supportive of the idea, only one had so far committed himself to directly participating. I was not terribly optimistic that others would be joining for some considerable time. STERRY is not a common surname so the number of people likely to be interested would always be small.

Surprisingly, another one of the main STERRY research group joined the Project at the end of January and a fourth in March. Only one test result was in by then so progress seemed rather slow. My results finally arrived at the end of March but disappointingly did not match with the only other person so far tested who shared my direct line. Our carefully documented common ancestor dated from the early 1700s.

This came as quite a blow. I was of course convinced we were going to match. I discussed it at some length with the other principal STERRY researchers who were following the Project with some interest. Was there an error in the research? Was there an unknown illegitimacy or adoption? Had some unusual variant or even erroneous spelling of the surname led us down a wrong path? In the end we decided there were simply too few people tested so far to draw any conclusions at all and that we would have to wait for more testing to be completed.

In early April another set of results came in. As this person belonged to a different STERRY family line altogether, not surprisingly he did not match to anyone else so far tested. [There are currently only about twelve STERRY trees in total that link the vast majority of the census and BDM data across the UK, Australia, the USA and Canada from the earliest parish registers up to modern times.] However, since all the STERRY family lines originated in England — with the exception of a Norwegian STERRI line — there was always the faint hope that there might have been a connection prior to parish records.

A fifth principal STERRY researcher also joined the Project in early April. Up to this stage I had not embarked on any significant publicity for the Project other than through the website and my closest genealogical contacts. [There are only about six or so principal researchers from the UK, US and Australia.] This was about to change. David Sterry from Cheshire offered to help with some publicity in an attempt to find more descendants of his own Southwold, Suffolk and associated Lowestoft, Suffolk line who might be willing to participate in the Project. He was keen to try and establish any link between them. I hadn't heard about DNA research actually trying to target particular family lines, but it seemed like a good idea.

We put together a brief introductory letter with his contact details rather than mine. We reasoned that not everyone has



Samuel Henry Sterry 1771-1856
[Kindly provided from the family collection of Peter Wasey Sterry]
Samuel was a physician, main benefactor and organizing genius of the School for the Indigent Blind in St George's Fields, London.

email and that more traditional letter writing and phoning might reach potential participants that otherwise would be missed. As I lived in Australia, his contact details were certainly better for this purpose. David did a large mail out of every STERRY in the Lowestoft and area phone book and I contacted the editor of the local Lowestoft newspaper plus the local Family History Society and local Record Office. We got the best results from the Lowestoft Journal who published the letter not only in their local newspaper but also their other regional newspapers as far away as Norwich and Ipswich. The Editor of the Lowestoft Journal has also indicated his interest in writing up a short article on the Project as it develops as STERRYS have lived in Lowestoft for over 400 years and are a well known family in the area. I was more than delighted.

In June we finally got our first DNA match — between myself and another member of the same line — who shared a common ancestor dating from the late 1700s. This was very encouraging as it helped to narrow the location of the presumed break in the line on this particular tree that had been discovered from the very first two

tests completed. It also helped to encourage all of the principal researchers as we were all starting to wonder if anyone was going to end up related to anyone!

Our eighth member joined our Project in early August — a direct result of that Letter to the Editor run in the local newspaper.

In late August we got our second match. This one was not expected but was exactly the sort of link that I had hoped DNA testing might provide. There are two STERRY lines in the London area, both tracing back to the early 1800s, that we have never been able to link to one of the major STERRY lines. Both had reached brick walls despite years of research by both myself and other STERRY researchers. Bingo! A perfect match to one of the members of our Project who belonged to one of the oldest of the STERRY lines: the Longhope, Gloucestershire line. This will now significantly narrow down the search for the supporting documentary evidence that we still hope to find. I was delighted!

Not a bad result I think for a small One-Name Study with its DNA Project still very much in its infancy. DNA testing has already proved a valuable research tool. We look forward to more discoveries ahead.

In addition to connecting previously unlinked STERRY trees, our DNA Study has in addition brought us into contact with a lot of new people who otherwise would never have heard about the STERRY One-Name Study. It has also got us rethinking some of the connections in our established trees. As one of our principal researchers commented, 'perhaps the origins of the STERRY name are more complicated than we had previously thought'.

Journey of Discovery

You can easily add a DNA Project to your one-name study, and make discoveries that can't be made from the paper records. It couldn't be easier to get started today. Contact DNA@one-name.org ■