



Genealogy Newsletter - March 2018

More Confusion over DNA test results

Interesting to see in the March issue of *Who Do You Think You Are?* more readers' letters regarding the differences in DNA testing.

First, the differences with DNA ethnicity results between Ancestry and the results from MyHeritage and then the confusion over which is the right test for you where someone is struggling to interpret the results of an Autosomal DNA test with MyHeritage and a Y-DNA 12 test with Family Tree DNA. Luckily, the magazine's expert *Debbie Kennett* comes to the rescue with some advice.

Ethnicity tests are more properly known as biogeographical ancestry tests. They compare your DNA to reference populations and tell you how much of your DNA matches each population. The populations are taken from publicly available datasets and complemented with the companies' own proprietary databases. Since each company has a different dataset, it's not surprising that results differ. Note too that you're being compared with the DNA of living people. Present-day populations are not necessarily a good proxy for historical populations. A company's website should reveal which reference populations are being used. If your populations aren't included in its datasets, then you can only be matched with the closest populations so, choose one company and hope the results are right for you.

Regarding the right test, the Y-DNA test traces the all-male line thereby mimicking the pattern of surname inheritance – the test best used in the context of a dedicated surname project.

The Autosomal DNA tests provide information on all your ancestral lines. There are five main companies that offer autosomal DNA tests and while their population percentages can be fun, they generally have little practical genealogical utility, so are best used for cousin matching in genetic genealogy databases like Ancestry, and also help with one-name studies!

If you are considering taking a DNA test, please check out the website www.dnatestingchoice.com for the latest offers and especially customers comments, also look at my research guidance note: **Genetic Genealogy** for more information for you to make the right choice.

Finally, if like me you are searching for Irish ancestors...

If you haven't already, do look at the website <https://beyond2022.ie> its about **IRELAND'S VIRTUAL RECORD TREASURY**, which is reconstructing seven centuries of Ireland's Lost History, when on 30 June 1922 at the outset of the Irish Civil War, a cataclysmic explosion and fire destroyed the Public Record Office of Ireland along with most of its records in Dublin - it's got a fantastic video presentation!