

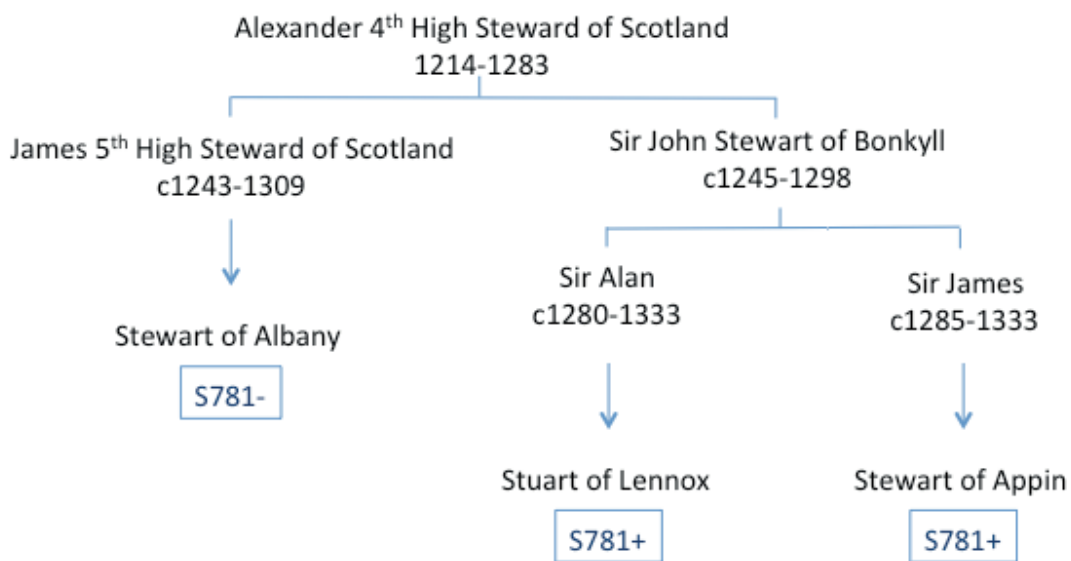
ROYAL SCOTLAND, ROYAL STEWART

Half of all the men who carry the surname of Stewart or Stuart are directly descended from royalty. And in a ground-breaking new study, we have for the first time identified a historical character with the beginning of a single male DNA lineage.

Sir John Stewart of Bonkyll was killed in 1298 fighting alongside William Wallace at the Battle of Falkirk but recent ancestry testing has shown that he left a fascinating royal legacy. Our Chief Scientist, Dr Jim Wilson, sampled the DNA of descendants of Sir John's two sons, Richard and Angus, and descendants of his brother, James in the male line. The modern descendants of both sons carry the Y chromosome marker S781+ but the descendants of his brother, James, did not have it. By a straightforward deduction, that means that the marker arose in Sir John Stewart of Bonkyll, and not in his father. If it had, the descendants of James would also carry it. And they do not.

A small family tree illustrates and please note the plus and minus signs that show which lines have the marker and which do not.

S781 marks the descendants of Sir John Stewart of Bonkyll c1245-1298



The second part of our findings is equally fascinating. Regardless of their family trees, 50% of all men who have the surname of Stewart or Stuart are the direct descendants of Scotland's long-lasting royal dynasty (who also came to rule over Britain and Ireland). This data has been derived from sampling of the general population by ScotlandsDNA, BritainsDNA, IrelandsDNA and YorkshiresDNA.

About 20% of all men who carry the famous surname share Sir John's lineage while 30% are descended from Sir John's brother, James, the 5th High Steward of Scotland. His son, Walter, married Marjorie Bruce, the daughter of Robert I, having helped him win the great victory at Bannockburn, and their son became Robert II, the first Stewart king.

The Duke of Buccleuch is directly descended from Sir John and a long line of Scottish Knights, Earls and Kings. Duke Richard said "My family's history has always been closely involved with the history of Scotland and Britain, but the fact that the rise of a DNA marker has been identified in an individual brings the past even closer, and makes it more personal. I am delighted to have been a guinea pig for the sort of history it is now possible to write thanks to DNA research."

There are about 70,000 carriers of the surname in Britain which means that about 17,500 men are of direct royal descent. And more detail about their ancestry has been discovered by our new study. For the first time, DNA sampling has been able to distinguish clearly between different cadet branches of the royal Stewarts. There are four; the Appin Stewarts who fought so bravely at Culloden, the Lennox Stewarts who were direct ancestors of James VI and I, and the Albany and Moray Stewarts who acted as regents.

It is precisely this sort of research that brings our history racing across the centuries. Historian, Alistair Moffat, commented that in the year of the 700th anniversary of Bannockburn, thousands of men can claim to be directly descended from the Stewarts who fought alongside Bruce and they can directly identify with generations of famous figures who shaped Scotland, Britain and Ireland.

Dr Jim Wilson said "These findings arose from a combination of deep pedigrees and DNA data. We can then use DNA alone to determine if people are descended in the male line from Sir John of Bonkyll and in time other historical individuals – whether noblemen or commoners. This is the start of a new era in genealogy, where we will be able to draw family trees without paper records."

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Notes to Editor:

Launched in November 2011, ScotlandsDNA immediately set out to innovate. By combining historical analysis with the genetic information that can be gleaned from testing for ancestral DNA, we aimed to achieve a new understanding of Scotland's history – a people's history.

A commercial company closely involved in scientific research, ScotlandsDNA offers a unique package of information featuring thorough historical analyses of results currently unmatched by any other European DNA ancestry testing company.