

## Welcome to the Viking Health Study—Shetland Newsletter!

Thanks for taking part in Viking Health Study—Shetland. We hope you're keeping safe and well.

It's been a while since we were last in touch but we've got some interesting updates for you. This newsletter provides details on study expansion, an award for our Chief Investigator Jim Wilson, and some research we have conducted thanks to your involvement!

You may have also noticed a **small form inside this letter**. We would greatly appreciate your completion and return of the form, giving your **email address** and **name**, in the prepaid envelope provided. We would like to keep in touch from time to time, with updates on project findings and invitations to contribute to new research, and email will be a more efficient way for us to contact you in future.

For more information about how we use your data and keep it safe, please see our **Privacy Policy** at [www.ed.ac.uk/viking/privacy-notice](http://www.ed.ac.uk/viking/privacy-notice), or let us know if you'd like to have a copy posted to you.

### MRC funding opens door to new recruitment



Thanks to MRC funding, we're pleased to announce that we're expanding recruitment!

We've combined ideas from the VIKING Health Study—Shetland with our sister projects, the Orkney Complex Disease Study (ORCADES) and Viking II.

We aim to recruit a further 2,000 volunteers with at least two or more grandparents from the Hebrides, Orkney or Shetland. All volunteers need to do is complete an online questionnaire and provide a spit sample by post.

The new recruitment aims to take total volunteer numbers to 10,000, allowing us to strengthen our research into common, complex diseases.

As you're already part of the VIKING Health Study—Shetland, which is included in Viking Genes, you can't join the new recruitment

Do you know someone who might like to take part? Please send them an invitation. They can find out more information and sign up at [www.ed.ac.uk/viking](http://www.ed.ac.uk/viking).

### Founder Jim Wilson becomes a Royal Society of Edinburgh Fellow

Congratulations to Jim Wilson, Professor of Human Genetics at the University of Edinburgh. He was recently made a fellow of The Royal Society of Edinburgh!



Of Fair Isle heritage, he grew up in Orkney where he attended Kirkwall Grammar School. He then went on to study genetics at the University of Edinburgh. After a year working in Bavaria, Jim completed a DPhil in human population genetics at New College in Oxford. Jim moved back to Edinburgh in 2003 after a stint at University College London, to take up a Royal Society University Research Fellowship.

He is the founder of ORCADES and the VIKING Health Study - Shetland, and is the chief investigator of Viking Genes. The fellowship was awarded in recognition of his services to scientific research.



MRC Human  
Genetics  
Unit



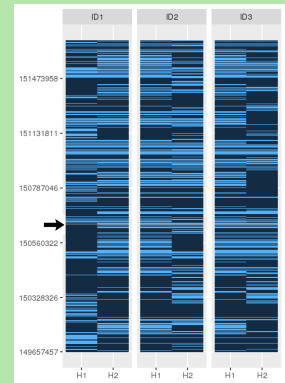
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### Rare ancestral variant found in Viking Health Study

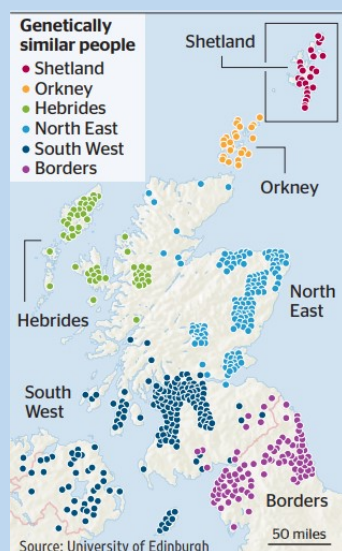
DNA analysis of some volunteers from our Viking Health Study—Shetland found a rare variant in the sequence of a gene. This gene is known to be important in the control of heart rhythm.

The shared DNA sequences were searched for in the genetic data of all volunteers in the VIKING Health Study - Shetland. This revealed five people with the same DNA sequence in the gene. It's called KCNH2 and can cause an irregular heartbeat.

GP's of our volunteers were told about the research findings, in line with agreed ethics, allowing them to advise on further testing.



### Scottish Genetic Landscape Echoes the DNA of Past Kingdoms



A study, including VIKING Health Study—Shetland and Orkney Complex Disease Study (ORCADES) data, found that the genetics of people across Scotland today still have similarities to distant ancestors.

The research compared genetic data from health research studies across Britain and Ireland. It

mapped where different genetically-related groups of people came from. Many of the genetic patterns found mapped onto past Kingdoms of Gaels, Picts, Britons and Norse.

The research team showed that data from people living in more rural areas may be needed to make new medical research discoveries in British and Irish populations. This is particularly important as rarer genetic changes become a key focus of genetic research, as they often have a larger impact on health.

Learn more about this research and more by visiting our website at [www.ed.ac.uk/viking](http://www.ed.ac.uk/viking).



We have brought all of our studies under one new title, 'Viking Genes'. This allows us to easily combine the data we receive from volunteers, increasing our ability to make new scientific discoveries. We welcome you to Viking Genes and look forward to updating you under this new name in future newsletters!

We also hope to be in touch with you again soon, with new research opportunities. Please keep an eye out for your invitation in the next year or so!

### Our website and social media channels

We're proud to announce that we've created a brand new website! It contains information on both ORCADES and the VIKING Health Study - Shetland. Please come and visit us at [www.ed.ac.uk/viking](http://www.ed.ac.uk/viking) to see our fresh look and design. Keep up to date with our latest news and events.

You can also find us on social media. Follow us on:

- Twitter: @vikinggenes,
- Facebook: @vikinggene
- Instagram: @viking\_genes



MRC Human Genetics Unit



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